NATION

Manipur protesters march to CM's house, fight cops

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BUSINESS

Paytm business strong despite RBI action on PPBL

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SPORTS

Rahul's century goes in vain as Punjab Kings beat Delhi

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈھ روزنامہ بنگلور

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SC asks states, UTs to plan guidelines for ICUs

NEW DELHI, APRIL 25: The Supreme Court has asked all the states and Union Territories to prepare a 'realistic and practical' action plan to implement the guidelines necessary as a minimum standard for intensive care units (ICUs). The apex court was informed that 'Guidelines for Organisation and Delivery of Intensive Care Services', on which there is consensus and which is practical, implementable and necessary as a minimum standard for an ICU, has been prepared. A bench of Justices Ahsanuddin Amanullah and R Mahadevan in its order dated 20 April said copies of the guidelines should be shared with all the states and UTs. The bench held that such a plan should be realistic and practical. It also asked heads of health and medical education departments to convene a meeting of experts to prepare the said action plan. The court was hearing a matter relating to healthcare services, including guidelines for treatment of patients. —*PTI*

IMD issues advisories as temperatures soar

NEW DELHI, 25 APRIL

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Saturday issued detailed heatwave advisories as temperatures surged across several regions. Guidelines include avoiding direct sunlight during peak afternoon hours, staying hydrated, wearing light clothing and limiting strenuous outdoor activity. Special caution has been advised for children, the elderly and those with pre-existing conditions. Maximum temperatures in parts of northwest, central and peninsular India are between 40°C and 44°C, with 44.5°C recorded at Sri Ganganagar in Rajasthan. Several areas are witnessing temperatures up to 5°C above normal. Heatwave conditions are likely in parts of north and central India, while coastal regions may see hot, humid weather. —*PTI*

AAP seeks disqualification of rebel MPs from RS

Mann seeks to meet Prez as 6 of 7 defectors hail from Punjab

Raghav Chadha, Sandeep Pathak, Ashok Mittal, Swati Maliwal, Rajendra Gupta, Vikram Sahni and Harbhajan Singh

NEW DELHI/ CHANDIGARH, 25 APRIL

AAP on Saturday moved to seek disqualification of its seven Rajya Sabha MPs who defected to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), even as the rebels accused the party leadership of corruption and ideological drift.

Senior AAP leader Sanjay Singh said the party would write to the Rajya Sabha Chairman, arguing that splits have no legal validity under the anti-defection law. Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann has also sought time with President Droupadi Murmu to present the party's stand, with six of the seven defectors hailing from Punjab.

Leading the rebellion, Raghav Chadha said the MPs quit not out of fear but due to "disappointment, disengagement and disgust" with the leadership, alleging the party had fallen into "corrupt and compromised hands". The defectors — Chadha, Ashok Mittal, Sandeep Pathak, Harbhajan Singh, Rajendra Gupta, Vikram Sahni and Swati Maliwal — said AAP had strayed from its founding principles. Sources noted Mittal had Enforcement Directorate (ED) faced raids days earlier, while Harbhajan Singh has been under scrutiny by ED over alleged links to illegal betting apps. In a sharp response, Mann accused the BJP of engineering defections to weaken AAP in Punjab through inducements and intimidation. Using a culinary analogy, he said individual "ingredients" could not make a complete dish. While Chadha and Maliwal had earlier fallen out with the leadership, the defection of five others came as a surprise —*PTI*

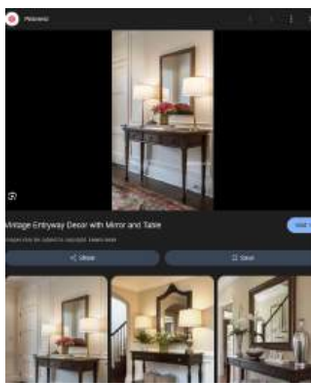
>>>*More on Page 3*

Raghav loses 1M followers after BJP switch

Raghav Chadha witnessed a sharp drop in his social media following after switching from the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Data shows the 37-year-old Rajya Sabha MP lost nearly one million Instagram followers within 24 hours of the move. His follower count fell from 14.6 million on Friday to 13.5 million by Saturday afternoon. The decline, particularly among younger users, suggests the political shift has not resonated well online —*PTI*

SHEESH MAHAL 2.0 HAUNTS KEJRI

BJP on Saturday targeted AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal over a newly allotted bungalow at Lodhi Estate, branding it "Sheesh Mahal 2" and alleging the use of private funds to create "lavish" amenities. Delhi PWD Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh Verma and BJP MP Bansuri Swaraj claimed the government-allotted residence was upgraded with five-star features beyond standard CPWD provisions. AAP, however, dismissed the accusations, stating the images circulated were sourced from Pinterest and not from Kejriwal's residence. BJP clarified that the pictures it posted were of proposed designs for the bungalow - SALAR



No repolling ordered in Tamil Nadu, West Bengal: EC

NEW DELHI/ KOLKATA, 25 APRIL

The Election Commission on Saturday said no repoll has been recommended in any of the 44,376 polling stations in West Bengal or 75,064 in Tamil Nadu where Assembly elections were held on Thursday, despite complaints of vote theft.

Officials said reports from the ground indicated no significant irregularities affecting the integrity of the voting process. Inputs from observers, micro-observers and field officials were reviewed before taking the decision, marking a departure from past elections—particularly in West Bengal—where repolls were frequently ordered over violence and alleged malpractice.

A senior EC official said polling in Bengal's first phase, covering 152 constituencies across 16 districts, was completed without major disruption, recording a high voter turnout of 92.6 per cent. Central forces and a three-point verification system were deployed to ensure free and fair voting.

Officials said reports from the ground indicated no significant irregularities affecting the integrity of the voting process —*PTI*

While all 234 seats in Tamil Nadu voted in a single phase, the remaining 142 constituencies in Bengal will go to the polls on April 29.

DIDI TO FILE CASE AGAINST SHAH

Meanwhile, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said she would file a "legal case" against Union Home Minister Amit Shah over his "violent remarks". Addressing a rally in Hooghly, she said such comments were unbecoming of a constitutional authority.Her response followed Shah's remarks in Arambagh warning that those troubling voters would be "hung upside down and straightened out" after the polls, drawing sharp criticism from TMC. —*PTI*

>>>*More on Page 3*

Iran restarts commercial flights for 1st time since war

TEHRAN, 25 APRIL

Iran has resumed commercial flights on Saturday from its capital's international airport for the first time since the US-Israel attacks started on 28 February. Iran's state-run television reported that flights to Istanbul, Muscat and Saudi's Medina took off from Tehran's Imam Khomeini International Airport.

Iran's state-owned carrier, Iran Air, operated its inaugural flight from Tehran to the second-largest city of Mashhad after a 56-day hiatus. Additionally, state-run IRNA news service said that more flights are scheduled for Baku, Najaf, Baghdad and Doha in the coming days.

Mohammad Amirani, CEO of the Iran Airports and Air Navigation Company, said Iran's eastern side—which borders Turkmenistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan—will be prioritised. Meanwhile, provincial airports, including Mashhad, Zahedan, Kerman, Yazd and Birjand, are slated to be nodes for directing air traffic, IRNA said The ongoing blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, meanwhile, has triggered the prospect of a mounting jet fuel crisis. The head of the International Energy Agency warned earlier this month that Europe has "six weeks or so [of] jet fuel left". The US-Israel war on Iran forced much of West Asia's airspace to shut down. Countries including Qatar and the UAE partially reopened their airspaces days after the conflict began, with schedules for further expansion in the weeks that followed. —*PTI*

>>>*More on Page 6*

'Iran's 57-day internet blackout is the longest in history'

TEHRAN, 25 APRIL

Citizens in Iran have faced a 57-day internet blackout, according to the monitoring watchdog NetBlocks on Saturday. The total blackout was implemented following the joint US and Israeli strikes on Tehran on 28 February. NetBlocks identified the ongoing crisis as the "longest nation-scale internet shutdown on record in any country." This prolonged shutdown has isolated the Iranian population from the global community during a period of significant regional instability, stifling their voices, leaving families out of touch, and damaging the economy. The scale of this disruption surpasses any previous state attempts to control information. This follows a January blackout, allegedly used to obscure evidence of the deadliest crackdown on its citizens. —*ANI*

CUT & THROWN IN DUSTBIN

Another CET student claims sacred thread was cut in B'luru

CHIKKABALLAPUR, 25 APRIL

A controversy has erupted after a CET candidate alleged that his sacred thread (janivara) was cut during security checks at a private engineering college near Bengaluru's Devanahalli. This is the second case that has been reported in Bengaluru.

The incident reportedly involved Supreeth, a resident of Chintamani, who appeared for the CET examination on 23 April at Nagarjuna Engineering College. According to his family, a metal detector beeped during screening, prompting further checks, during which officials noticed he was wearing a sacred thread.

Supreeth alleged that despite offering to remove the janivara temporarily and wear it again after the examination, he was not allowed to do so.

Instead, a woman staff member allegedly cut the thread with scissors and discarded it in a dustbin. He later claimed he retrieved the cut pieces from a bin after completing the exam.

The incident reportedly involved Supreeth, a resident of Chintamani, who appeared for the CET examination on 23 April —*ANI*

His mother, Vani, said the incident left him emotionally distressed and affected his performance.

She noted that his Upanayanam ceremony had been conducted just ten days earlier, and he had only begun learning associated rituals, including chanting the Gayatri Mantra. Vani added that Supreeth had lost his father last year, and the ceremony was held after the first death anniversary rites. She urged Higher Education Minister MC Sudhakar to intervene.

Superintendent of Police Kushal Chowksi said the matter is being examined, though college authorities have denied the allegation. —*Salar News*

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Contractors axe 25 trees illegally, attack foresters

BALLARI, 25 APRIL

A case has been registered against contractors for allegedly felling around 25 trees without permission under the pretext of road widening from Vidyanagar Circle to Kolagal Road in Ballari.

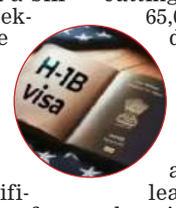
Acting on a tip-off, Deputy Forest Officer Sunilkumar R. Chauhan and his team rushed to the site late on 23 April and found trees being cut between chainage 1.10km and 1.60km. When asked for documents, the contractors gave evasive replies.

Officials alleged that two workers, identified as Tillu and Ravi Moka, snatched and smashed the officer's phone while he was recording the act. The felling was halted with police help. About five tonnes of timber was seized and a case registered under relevant forest laws. —*Salar News*

Reps' bill wants H1B paused for 3 yrs to check 'cheap foreign labour'

WASHINGTON, 25 APRIL

A group of Republican lawmakers has introduced a bill in the US Congress seeking a three-year pause on the H1B visa programme, arguing it has been misused to replace American workers with "cheap foreign labour".



The move could significantly impact Indian professionals, who form one of the largest groups of H1B visa holders, especially in the US technology sector.

The proposed End H1B Visa Abuse Act of 2026 calls for sweeping reforms, including cutting the annual cap from 65,000 to 25,000 and mandating a minimum salary of USD 2,00,000. It also proposes barring H1B visa holders from bringing dependants and requiring them to leave the US before changing to another non-immigrant status.

The bill seeks to replace the current lottery system with a wage-based selection process and requires employers to certify they cannot find qualified American workers or have not conducted layoffs. It also proposes banning multiple job holdings by H1B workers and prohibiting third-party staffing agencies from employing them.

Further, it aims to stop federal agencies from hiring non-immigrant workers and prevent H1B visa holders from transitioning to permanent residency, reinforcing the programme's temporary nature. —*PTI*

KAVITHA LAUNCHES NEW POLITICAL OUTFIT, NAMES IT TRS

HYDERABAD, 25 APRIL

K Kavitha, daughter of former Telangana chief minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, on Saturday launched a new political outfit, the Telangana Rashtra Sena (TRS), at an event on the outskirts of Hyderabad.

Announcing the party's name and agenda, Kavitha mounted a sharp attack on the ruling Congress, the BJP and her father's BRS, describing KCR as a "changed" and "soulless" leader. The BRS was originally founded as Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) before being renamed in 2022.

Kavitha, a former MLC, was suspended from the BRS in September 2025 for "anti-party activities" after she accused senior leaders, including her cousin T. Harish Rao, of corruption and internal sabotage linked to the Kaleshwaram lift irrigation project.

Criticising KCR's tenure as the state's first chief minister, she said he had failed to realise the statehood movement's core promises of "water, funds and jobs" and to build a "social Telangana". —*PTI*

>>>*More on Page 3*

8 hurt as bridge collapses during temple procession

BENGALURU, 25 APRIL

Eight people were injured, one seriously, after a temporary wooden footbridge collapsed during a religious procession at Pucchemogaru village in Moodbidri taluk on Saturday. The incident occurred as devotees carried the sacred Daiva Bhandara in a palanquin from Bavadabailu to Takode-Barke for a temple Dharma Nemotsava . As the procession attempted to cross a narrow bridge over a stream, the structure gave way under the weight. Eyewitnesses said the palanquin overturned and a wooden beam fell on the bearers. All eight sustained injuries, including a leg fracture. The injured were hospitalised, and artefacts in the palanquin were also damaged. —*SALAR NEWS*

State completes H5N1 containment ops

Amid bird flu fears, public is advised to avoid consuming meat or eggs from sick poultry

BENGALURU, 25 APRIL

The Karnataka government has successfully completed a 10-day intensive surveillance and containment operation after the detection of the H5N1 Avian Influenza outbreak here, officials said on Saturday.

The outbreak was reported at the State Poultry Rearing Training Centre in Mathkuru village, Hesaraghatta, on 14 April.

The surveillance was conducted by the State Department of Health and Family Welfare in coordination with the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services Department, officials said.

Once the outbreak was confirmed, following laboratory reports from the National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases (NIHSAD-Bhopal), State and District Rapid Response Teams along with Hesaraghatta and Sonnenahalli PHC (Primary Health Centres) teams were deployed.

An infected zone of 0-3 km and a surveillance zone of 3-10 km radius was established. The Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Service culled all the birds and safely disposed of the eggs and feed.

The health department said the surveillance zone from the infective focus in the 10 km radius, a total population of 28,172 across 22 villages was surveyed from day 1 to day 10.

- The outbreak was reported at the State Poultry Rearing Training Centre in Mathkuru village, Hesaraghatta, on 14 April. An infected zone of 0-3 km and a surveillance zone of 3-10 km radius was

During the surveillance period, nasopharyngeal samples collected from all quarantined staff on Day 5, sent to NIV-Bengaluru, were found to be negative for H5N1, it said.

On day 10, nasopharyngeal samples were collected and the results are awaited. No human case of H5N1 infection has been detected in the infected or surveillance zones.

"All healthcare facilities in Bengaluru have been instructed to continue ILI/SARI (Influenza-Like Illness/Severe Acute Respiratory Infection) case surveillance, and ensure adequate stocks of PPE, triple-layer medical masks, oseltamivir, viral transport medium, and throat swab kits," it said.

The public has been advised to avoid handling or consuming meat or eggs from sick or dead poultry and report sightings of sick or dead birds to veterinary or health authorities. — *PTI*

OMAR QUESTIONS CLAIMS OF ADVANTAGE FOR BJP IN WB POLLS

BENGALURU, 25 APRIL

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Saturday questioned claims of an electoral advantage for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in West Bengal, alleging manipulation of voter rolls and raising concerns over the Special Intensive Revision (SIR).

With Assembly elections underway in two phases—first held on April 23 and the second due on April 29—Abdullah said high polling percentages were "misleading" and did not reflect ground realities. He claimed the total number of voters had decreased compared to the previous election, even as turnout percentage appeared higher.

"The percentage has increased because the number of voters has been reduced due to SIR," he said, alleging large-scale deletions from electoral rolls. He further claimed that in Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's constituency, up to 25 per cent of voters had been removed, and in 70 seats, deletions exceeded the BJP's previous margins of defeat.

Abdullah said concerns over electoral integrity extended beyond voting machines to "pre-election management", including delimitation and voter list revisions, and expressed disappointment that courts had deferred hearing related petitions until after the polls.

On defections by AAP Rajya Sabha MPs led by Raghav Chadha to the BJP, he termed the "Aya Ram Gaya Ram" culture nothing new, adding such moves would have limited electoral impact.

He also voiced concern over the ongoing Iran conflict, citing rising oil prices and global supply disruptions, and called for an early end to hostilities, saying Iran deserved compensation.

Earlier, Abdullah met filmmakers in Bengaluru, promoting Jammu and Kashmir as a destination for cinema and assuring institutional support to the film industry. — *PTI*

Vaishnaw inaugurates high-speed rail complex at BEML in Bengaluru

BENGALURU, 25 APRIL

Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Saturday visited the BEML unit here and reviewed ongoing manufacturing and infrastructure projects, including railway coach production.

During his visit to the BEML Tippasandra campus, the Minister inaugurated 'Aditya', a specialised complex dedicated to the development of high-speed rail coaches. Officials said the facility is currently focused on manufacturing 'B-28 coaches', marking a step forward in indigenous rail technology.

Vaishnaw, who holds the Railways, Electronics and IT, and Information and Broadcasting portfolios, interacted with senior officials and staff, and inspected railway coaches under production.

He underscored the complexity of high-speed rail systems and described their domestic development as a significant milestone for India's engineering capabilities. Highlighting future connectivity, he said high-speed rail would transform travel by effectively bringing major cities closer.

Citing an example, he noted that travel time between Chennai and Bengaluru could reduce to around 73 minutes, making the cities function as an integrated hub.

On regional connectivity, the Minister said a Vande Bharat service between Mangaluru and Bengaluru would be launched soon, adding that key technical works, including electrification of the Hassan–Mangaluru line and safety upgrades, have been completed. He also announced enhanced services between Mumbai and Bengaluru, including a new Mail Express via Hubballi and an upcoming Vande Bharat Sleeper.

He praised BEML engineers and reaffirmed the government's commitment to sustainable infrastructure growth. —*PTI*

BJP terms Cabinet's internal quota approval 'injustice'

BENGALURU, 25 APRIL

The BJP attacked the Congress government over its decision on internal reservation for Scheduled Castes, alleging injustice to several communities.

Karnataka BJP President BY Vijayendra and BJP MP Govind Karjol criticised the government, , accusing it of delay and dilution of quota.

The Cabinet on Friday cleared a revised internal reservation formula for SCs within the overall 15 per cent quota, paving the way for long-pending government recruitment. The Cabinet approved 5.25 per cent reservation each for the "right-hand groups" and "left-hand groups", and about 4.5 per cent for other SCs.

In a post on X, Vijayendra alleged that the government had delayed the distribution of reservation among SCs for two-and-a-half years despite a Supreme Court order, before classifying them into A, B and C categories. He said the BJP government had increased reservation from 15 per cent to 17 per cent, but the present dispensation had reduced allocations.

"The quota for Category 'A' has been reduced from 6 per cent to 5.25 per cent and for Category 'B' from 5.5 per cent to 5.25 per cent, thereby causing grave injustice," he said, adding that allocations meant for many communities had been merged into Category 'C' and reduced to 4.5 per cent instead of the 5 per cent," he said. — *PTI*

Internal quota is a historic move: Govt

BELAGAVI, 25 APRIL

Karnataka Public Works Department Minister Satish Jarkiholi termed the government's decision to implement internal reservation as "historic," noting that it fulfils a long-pending demand of several communities.

He said the decision was announced at a Cabinet meeting in the presence of all ministers, including those representing various communities.

Responding to BJP criticism, Jarkiholi said opposition parties tend to find fault with every government decision. — *Salar News*

WALK FOR PEACE

Monks of the Maha Bodhi Society took out a peace march in Bengaluru on Saturday to mark Bodhi Week, which commemorates the enlightenment of Gautam Buddha —*MOHAMMED ASAD*

MAN FOUND MURDERED IN UTTARA KANNADA HOTEL

UTTARA KANNADA, 25 APRIL

A 39-year-old man was murdered late Friday night inside a hotel in Mundgod town of Uttara Kannada district, police said. The deceased is Zameer Ahmed Dargavale. According to preliminary reports, he had gone to the hotel near the Mundgod bus stand along with a friend for dinner around 11pm.

Police said that a group of four to five unidentified People entered the hotel and launched a premeditated attack on Zameer.

The attackers are said to have thrown chilli powder into his eyes to disorient him before assaulting him with deadly weapons. Sources said Zameer had sent his friend outside to a nearby shop to buy cigarettes moments before the attack. Taking advantage of his isolation, the attackers stormed in and carried out the assault.

Blinded by the chilli powder, Zameer reportedly ran towards the kitchen area in an attempt to escape. However, the attackers chased, caught hold of him, and inflicted fatal injuries before fleeing the scene. The hotel owner immediately alerted the Mundgod police, who rushed to the spot and began collecting evidence.

Police said about one-and-a-half years ago, Zameer had been kidnapped, and the abductors had demanded Rs 30 lakh. He was later rescued after swift police action, and the accused were arrested.

Cops are probing whether the earlier kidnapping has any connection with the murder. —SALAR NEWS

Gundu Rao condemns removal of sacred thread during CET

BENGALURU, 25 APRIL

Karnataka Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao has strongly condemned the alleged removal of sacred threads and other religious symbols from students during the Karnataka Common Entrance Test (KCET) examination at Krupanidhi College in Bengaluru. Similarly, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad organisation demanded strict action, calling it a violation of religious rights.

"The inhuman act of asking students to remove their ear studs, bangles, hijab or sacred thread, and even cutting long sleeves with scissors, thereby affecting their morale, is unacceptable and condemnable," Rao said in a post X, responding to the controversy that invigilators at the Madivala examination centre forced students to remove their religious symbols, including the sacred thread.

He assured action, even as police have registered a case.

Meanwhile, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), Karnataka South, strongly condemned the incident, alleging that it had hurt the religious rights and self-respect of the Hindu community. Calling the sacred thread a symbol of religious heritage and dignity, it said, In their statement, VHP asserted that "society will not tolerate any act that insults it," and demanded a thorough probe and stringent action against those responsible. —*PTI*

Ex-minister alleges mass copying at SSLC exams

MYSURU, 25 APRIL

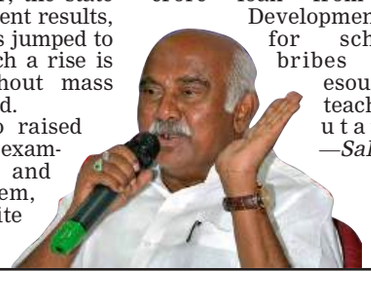
Former education minister and BJP MLC H Vishwanath on Saturday alleged irregularities in the conduct of SSLC examinations for 2025–26, claiming the sharp rise in pass percentage points to large-scale malpractice.

Addressing a press conference, he accused the government of enabling mass copying by removing CCTV cameras from several examination centres. "Last year, the state recorded 80.1 per cent results, but this year it has jumped to 94.41 per cent. Such a rise is not possible without mass copying," he alleged.

Vishwanath also raised concerns over the examination pattern and evaluation system, noting that despite the high overall pass percentage, a significant number of students had failed in Kannada. He questioned how the state could achieve over 94 per cent results amid an ongoing shortage of teachers in government schools due to delays in recruitment.

He cautioned that the quality of pre-university education could be affected as a large number of students had cleared SSLC this year.

The BJP leader added the State had taken a Rs 2,000 crore loan from Asian Development Bank for schoolsbut bribes were esought for teacher deputations. —*Salar News*



BITTEN BY ANTS

7 get notices for newborn's death

MYSURU, 25 APRIL

Seven Intensive Care Unit (ICU) staff members at Cheluvamba Maternity Care and Children's Hospital have been issued show-cause notices following the death of a premature newborn amid allegations of ant bites and medical negligence.

The notices, served to two doctors, staff nurses and other ICU personnel on duty between 15 and 17 April, seek explanations within 48 hours. Officials have warned that failure to respond could invite disciplinary action. A separate notice has also been issued to a staff nurse for allegedly misbehaving with the infant's mother while handing over the child.

The infant's parents alleged that their seven-month premature male baby, weighing 1.4 kg, died due to ant bites in the ICU along with negligence by hospital authorities. They staged a protest outside the hospital on Thursday, demanding justice.

- A separate notice has also been issued to a staff nurse for allegedly misbehaving with the infant's mother

Hospital superintendent Dr Lakshmikanth issued the notices. An autopsy was conducted at the K R Hospital mortuary in the presence of the parents.

Speaking to Salar News, Dean and Director of Mysuru Medical College and Research Centre, Dr Dakshayini KH, said, "An autopsy of the newborn was conducted in the presence of the parents on Friday. Samples have been sent to advanced laboratories of the National Centre for Vector Borne Disease Control in Bhopal for testing. Action will be initiated against any negligent staff after examining the lab reports." —*Salar News*

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah visits senior Congress leader and former deputy chairman of Rajya Sabha K Rahman Khan at his residence in Jayanagar, Bengaluru, on Saturday to inquire about his health. He wished him a speedy recovery and was accompanied by ministers Zameer Ahmed Khan and Byrathi Suresh (not in pic), and Chief Government Whip in the Legislative Assembly Ashok Pattan. Khan's son and AICC Secretary Mansoor Ali Khan looks on —*X @SIDDARAMAIAH*

BJP's Sheesh Mahal pictures fake, says AAP

BJP says AAP Chief's lavish home not in line with his claims of being a common man

NEW DELHI, 25 APRIL

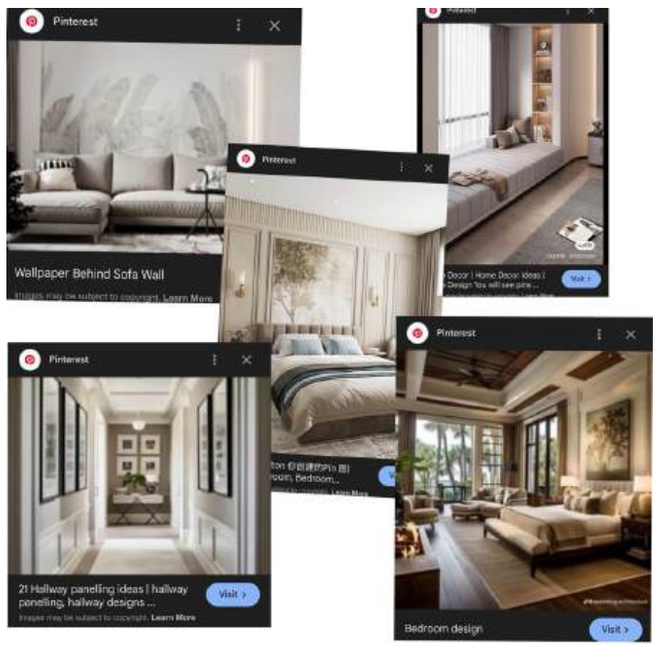
The BJP on Saturday cornered Aam Aadmi Party national convener Arvind Kejriwal over the new bungalow allotted to him at Lodhi Estate here, dubbing it as 'Sheesh Mahal 2' and alleging expenditure of private money to build luxurious amenities in it.

Showing pictures of the Type VII bungalow allotted by the Centre to Kejriwal, Delhi Public Works Department Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh Verma said the Central Public Works Department does not spend so much money on bungalows. He sought to know how much money was spent on the bungalow and what the source of it was.

Meanwhile, AAP accused the BJP of using "fake" pictures from the internet and projecting them as the residence of Kejriwal.

AAP leader Atishi said the images of the house were all taken from Pinterest. "To find out whose house is how luxurious, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta ji and lieutenant governor sahib should open their own houses, and Kejriwal ji will open his house. The public will decide for itself," she added.

AAP Chief Spokesperson Priyanka Kakkar AAP had challenged the BJP to show Prime Minister Narendra Modi's residence.BJP clarified that the pictures were of the "proposed designs" of the bungalow. BJP MP Bansuri Swaraj said the bunglow is not in line with his claims of being a common man. —*PTI*



The supposed pictures of Arvind Kejriwal's new bungalow, which AAP claims have been taken from Pininterest —*X*

BJP is a party of illiterate thugs
-Raghav Chadha in 2022

I did not want to be a part of AAP's crimes
-Raghav Chadha in 2026

The BJP washing machine is back along with the Modi washing powder. Those who projected themselves as paragons of virtue, integrity, and ideology stand brutally exposed
-Jairam Ramesh, Congress leader

Chadha, others wouldn't have left if AAP was right: Anna Hazare

MUMBAI, 25 APRIL

Social activist **Anna Hazare** has said Raghav Chadha and six other Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Rajya Sabha members would not have quit the party had it followed the "right" path.

Hazare had earlier said that everyone had the right to hold an opinion in a democracy.

AAP Rajya Sabha members Raghav Chadha and Sandeep Pathak addressed a joint press conference in Delhi on Friday, announcing their exit from the Arvind Kejriwal-led party to join the BJP.

Chadha claimed that nearly two-thirds of AAP's Rajya Sabha members had quit the party and would function as a separate faction.

Hazare reiterated that Chadha and others must have faced difficulties within AAP, and that is why they left. "Had the party gone in the right direction, they would not have quit the party," he added.

"There must be some or the other reason (for their leaving AAP). In a democracy, every person has a view about where to stay and leave," Hazare said.

The Chadha-led exodus of Rajya Sabha MPs marks a significant setback for the Kejriwal-led party since its formation in 2012, —*PTI*

WB Minister's asset value jumps 69% in five years

KOLKATA, 25 APRIL

According to his poll affidavits, Kolkata Mayor and senior TMC leader Firhad Hakim reported a 69 per cent rise in total assets over the last five years, growing from Rs 13.34 crore in 2021 to Rs 22.57 crore in 2026. His annual income saw a steeper 160 per cent increase over the same period. The affidavits also indicated a change in his legal profile. While Hakim had listed one pending criminal case in his 2021 nomination papers, the 2026 affidavit records two pending criminal cases against him. His movable and immovable properties together include bank deposits, investments, jewellery and multiple real estate holdings in Kolkata and adjoining districts, also account for the increase in his net worth. —*PTI*

AAP MLA flags unit's Instagram suspension

NEW DELHI, 25 APRIL

AAP Gujarat's Instagram account was suspended, with party leaders on Saturday alleging the move reflects the BJP's 'fear' of the party's rising voter support. The development comes a day after a joint press conference on Friday, Raghav Chadha announced that seven MPs, including himself, have quit the party and will join the BJP. AAP MLA Sanjeev Jha said the party's Gujarat unit had been receiving strong public support during the ongoing local body polls and questioned the timing of the suspension. Jha said, "Is the BJP scared of AAP's rising popularity in Gujarat? The account of AAP Gujarat, which has been garnering massive support amid local body elections, has been suspended. No one can stop the change." —*PTI*

BRS, Congress, BJP are corrupt: Kavitha

HYDERABAD, 25 APRIL

BRS, Congress and BJP are now riddled with corruption, 'family rule' and favouritism, said **K Kavitha** as she sharpened her attack on all three parties while outlining her new political agenda.

Announcing 'Panchajanya', a set of five promises including free education and healthcare, Kavitha also took aim at her father K. Chandrasekhar Rao and brother K. T. Rama Rao, questioning their political approach. She said KCR was speaking without "political maturity", adding that while such remarks could be expected from KTR, it was surprising coming from him.

Kavitha said she launched her outfit as KCR had failed to respond to pressing public issues under the current Congress regime, citing demolitions in Hyderabad and Khammam, flooding of farmlands and a fatal road accident near Chevella. She described KCR as a "changed" and "mechanical" leader, alleging he was surrounded by "jackals".

She further accused him of neglecting key projects such as Palamuru-Ranga Reddy irrigation in favour of expanding the Bharat Rashtra Samithi nationally. She alleged she was expelled after raising corruption in the Kaleshwaram project, while "tainted" leaders were retained. She also termed-Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy as 'Hitler'. —*PTI*

EC suspends 5 WB cops for 'misconduct'

KOLKATA, 25 APRIL

The Election Commission has directed the West Bengal government to suspend five police officials in Diamond Harbour and initiate disciplinary action against them, for "serious misconduct" and allegedly failing to maintain neutrality during the assembly polls, officials said on Saturday.

In a communication to the state chief secretary, the poll panel said the action followed a report submitted by the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of West Bengal about the conduct of police personnel.

The officers to be suspended are additional superintendent of police, Sandip Garai and sub-divisional police officer, Sajal Mondal, Diamond Harbour Police Station's inspector-in-charge, Mausam Chakraborty, Falta Police Station inspector-in-charge, Ajay Bag and Usthi Police Station officer-in-charge, Subhechha Bag.

"After considering the facts and circumstances of the matter, the commission directs that these officers may be suspended forthwith and disciplinary proceedings be initiated for their serious misconduct and failure to maintain neutrality during West Bengal Legislative Elections 2026," the EC said in its order.

The poll panel also directed the state government to send a report on additional superintendent of police Garai, an IPS officer, to his cadre controlling authority in the Ministry of Home Affairs.

In the same order, the poll panel asked the state government to issue a warning to Diamond Harbour Superintendent of Police Ishani Pal for "failing to ensure discipline and fairness" among subordinate officers in election-related duties. —*PTI*

The five suspended police officers allegedly failed to maintain neutrality during the recent Assembly elections in West Bengal —*ANI*

Every Indian has a stake in this election. The impact of infiltration is not limited to West Bengal and Assam. It is spilling over to Jharkhand, Bihar and other states
-Himanta Biswa Sarma, Assam Chief Minister

—*ANI*

Ex-DGP Sreelekha named accused in BJP protest case

T'PURAM, 25 APRIL

Kerala's former Director General of Police (DGP) R Sreelekha has been named an accused in the case related to a BJP protest alleging assault on party workers at Vattiyoorkavu in Thiruvananthapuram, police said. Sreelekha, a BJP councillor in the Thiruvananthapuram Corporation, inaugurated a BJP Mahila Morcha protest outside the Vattiyoorkavu police station against the alleged police assault on BJP workers in Nettayam. During the protest, Sreelekha was seen chanting the slogan 'poda pulle police,' which is widely perceived as derogatory. Police first booked five BJP leaders and 50 others, drawing criticism for omitting Sreelekha despite video evidence; a revised report now names him as one of the accused. —*PTI*

Shah promises CAA in Bengal

JAMALPUR/ SHYAMPUR, 25 APRIL

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday asserted that the BJP had virtually sealed its victory in phase 1 of the West Bengal assembly polls itself, claiming the party would win 110 seats.

Shah also promised swift implementation of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) to crackdown on infiltration, and a 'fear-free' Bengal for women after coming to power.

Addressing election rallies in Jamalpur of Purba Bardhaman district and Shyampur in Howrah, Shah harped on Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) for the Matua community, women's safety, and alleged infiltration from Bangladesh while projecting the election as a battle to end Mamata Banerjee's rule.

With the politically influential Matua community's vote central to BJP's electoral calculations in several border districts, Shah accused Banerjee of deliberately blocking the implementation of the CAA and keeping those refugee families in uncertainty for vote-bank politics.

Shah also linked infiltration to unemployment and resource scarcity, accusing the TMC leadership of shielding illegal entrants for electoral gains.

The remarks come amid a sharpened BJP pitch in border districts where identity, refugee status and demographic anxieties remains electorally potent. —*PTI*

Union Home Minister Amit Shah being felicitated during a public meeting in Purba Bardhaman district on Saturday—*ANI*

Didi helping rich in WB, Modi in country: Rahul

SERAMPORE, 25 APRIL

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday sought to put Prime Minister Narendra Modi and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in the same bracket, accusing both of helping the rich instead of the poor, while hankering for power.

Addressing an election rally at Serampore in Hooghly district, Gandhi said that Modi "claims to be a 'deshbhakt' (patriot), but is selling off the country. He spreads hatred wherever he goes."—*PTI*

Cong to challenge court verdict against Khera

CHENNAI, 25 APRIL

The Election Commission on Saturday said no re-poll was recommended in any polling station in the Tamil Assembly election held on April 23.The Congress expressed unwavering support for Pawan Khera after the Gauhati High Court rejected his anticipatory bail application, with plans to challenge the decision in the Supreme Court.

Congress General Secretary Jairam Ramesh said, "The entire Indian National Congress stands solidly in solidarity with Pawan Khera," and added that the party would appeal the High Court's ruling.

Khera's bail was denied in connection with allegations that Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's wife, Riniki Bhuyan Sharma, possessed multiple passports and undisclosed properties abroad.

The court observed that the case was not mere defamation but involved prima facie evidence related to forged documents.

Khera had moved Telangana High Court for transit anticipatory bail. —*PTI*

ASHOK LAHIRI IS VC

Govt reconstitutes Niti Aayog, new members appointed

NEW DELHI, 25 APRIL

Prime Minister Narendra Modi greets newly-appointed Vice Chairman of Niti Aayog Ashok Kumar Lahiri —*PTI*

The government has reconstituted the Niti Aayog, appointing former chief economic advisor Ashok Kumar Lahiri as vice chairman and five full-time members, including economist KV Raju, Director of AIIMS M Srinivas and Abhay Karandikar, Secretary, Department of Science and Technology.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is also the chairman of Niti Ayog, wished a productive and impactful tenure to Lahiri and the new full-time members, including scientist Gobardhan Das and former cabinet secretary Rajiv Gauba.

He said that the Niti Aayog has emerged as a vital pillar in India's policy-making architecture, fostering cooperative federalism, furthering reforms and boosting 'Ease of Living'.

Lahiri is amongst India's most experienced and senior economists with a career spanning over four decades. Currently a BJP MLA in West Bengal, he is a former chief economic advisor to the Indian government and a member of the 15th Finance Commission.

Raju is a member of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister and also serves as the economic advisor to the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister.

Karandikar was a former director of IIT-Kanpur.Das is the director of the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Bhopal. —*PTI*

IUML rejects UDF, BJP deal charge

KOZHIKODE, 25 APRIL

IUML State General Secretary PMA Salam accused CPI(M) of being in "panic mode" over fears of defeat in Kerala's upcoming Assembly elections.

Responding to CPI(M)'s recent allegations that the UDF had struck a deal with the BJP in Kuttiady and Nadapuram, Salam stated this reflected CPI(M)'s realisation of imminent defeat and grassroots feedback confirming their poor prospects.

Polling was held on 9 April for the 140-member Kerala Assembly, with results due on 4 May. As a key UDF constituent, IUML leader Salam claimed CPI(M)'s accusations were attempts to seek "anticipatory bail" for their expected loss.

He alleged an unholy nexus between CPI(M) and BJP, asserting, "Earlier, they maintained a back-channel relationship, but this time the direct deal was evident. "

Parakkal Abdulla, contesting from Kuttiady, rejected claims of any understanding with the BJP. —*PTI*

Fednavis denies secret meeting with Uddhav

NASHIK, 25 APRIL

- Fadnavis said some people are intentionally spreading false news, adding that notices will be sent to such social media handles.

Maharashtra Chief Minister **Devendra Fadnavis** on Saturday denied meeting Shiv Sena (UBT) president Uddhav Thackeray, amid reports that two leaders held discussions at the CM's official residence in Mumbai.

"…We do not have any such subjects to discuss secretly. Even if Uddhav Thackeray wants to meet me, we can meet openly. No such meeting has taken place," Fadnavis told reporters after a darshan of Lord Shiva in Trimbakeshwar.

Fadnavis said some people are intentionally spreading false news, adding that notices will be sent to such (social media) handles.

Earlier, a media house linked to Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA) had claimed that Fadnavis and Thackeray met on Wednesday midnight at the chief minister's official residence, 'Varsha', in Mumbai.

Replying to a query regarding Dheerendra Shastri's comments on a historical meeting between Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and Samarth Ramdas, the chief minister said, "No such example is there in the history books."

Shastri reportedly claimed that Shivaji Maharaj renounced responsibilities and offered his crown to Samarth Ramdas. Fadnavis said people should avoid unnecessary controveries. —*PTI*

Godman Kharat accused of cheating aide

NASHIK, 25 APRIL

Police have registered one more case of cheating against self-styled godman Ashok Kharat in Nashik, who has been arrested for alleged sexual exploitation of several women and fraud, an official said on Saturday. In the latest case, Kharat is accused of cheating his then Chartered Accountant of Rs 8.76 crore during 2018-23. The victim was once a confidant of Kharat and served as a trustee of his Shivanika Trust. The 12 cases registered against Kharat so far include eight offences of sexual exploitation of women and four cases of cheating. Seven more cases have been filed in various cities in Maharashtra. Kharat was remanded to police custody till 26 April on Friday.—*PTI*

Minor gangraped in Rajasthan's Alwar, 1 held

JAIPUR, 25 APRIL

A 15-year-old girl was allegedly abducted and gang-raped by two men in Alwar district, Rajasthan, on Thursday. The victim was on her way to school when the incident occurred. Police arrested one suspect, Rahul Saini, 23, on Friday night, and are searching for the other. Former Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot said the incident has damaged the BJP government's law and order credibility, and added, "these criminals had been perpetrating such acts repeatedly, yet the police remained oblivious." He criticised police inaction, stating, "When the police fail to take action, the audacity of such criminals only grows."*—PTI*

Man, 40, held for sexually harassing minor in Surat

SURAT, 25 APRIL

A 40-year-old man, Aziz Sheikh, was arrested for stalking and sexually harassing a 16-year-old girl, sparking a protest involving nearly 700 locals outside a police station. The incident occurred Friday night when Sheikh targeted the girl after her coaching classes. Police had to use mild force to disperse the crowd, said Deputy Commissioner Nidhi Thakur. Sheikh was booked under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act. Thakur said, "We tried to explain the legal process to the crowd, but when they did not disperse, police used mild force." *—PTI*

—AI

Elderly Keralam couple escapes air conditioner fire

PATHANAMTHITTA, 25 APRIL

An elderly couple in Keralam narrowly escaped death when their air conditioner caught fire due to a short circuit, completely gutting their bedroom. They turned on the air conditioner at around 9pm, and it caught fire, said fire officials. The couple immediately rushed out of their house and called the fire brigade, while neighbours removed the Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) cylinders through the house's back door to prevent an explosion. The fire was doused before it spread further. The couple later reported that the air conditioner had not been serviced for two years. Although the wooden furniture was destroyed, gold ornaments and documents remained safe. "We switch on the air conditioner for two to three hours at night and then switch it off," the man told a TV channel *—PTI*

—ANI

Philosopher Muni Narayana Prasad dies at 87

THIRU'PURAM, 25 APRIL

Eminent philosopher and spiritual leader Muni Narayana Prasad, the head of Narayana Gurukula, died early Saturday at 87. He was undergoing treatment at a private hospital. Prasad, awarded the Padma Shri in 2024 and Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award, was a former government employee. He authored many books on philosophy and spirituality, and was praised by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan for propagating Sree Narayana Guru's teachings. Vijayan said, "He influenced many with his humanism and ability to communicate profound ideas simply," adding, "We have lost a teacher who taught society how to think."*—PTI*

Jadavpur faculty hits back at PM, says JU respected

Modi had said JU symbolises anarchy under TMC rule

KOLKATA, 25 APRIL

A day after Prime Minister Modi claimed that West Bengal's Jadavpur University has become a "symbol of anarchy under TMC's rule," its teachers' organisation said on Saturday that the institute has been recognised globally as a centre of excellence, "despite severe financial constraints."

The Jadavpur University Teachers' Association (JUTA) highlighted that, alongside academics and research, the institute has played a significant role in achieving social justice.

It alleged that "despite fulfilling all criteria for being granted the 'Institute of Eminence' status, the university has been deprived of due recognition."

At an election rally in Baruipur in Jadavpur Lok Sabha constituency on Friday, Modi referred to the frequent unrest in Jadavpur University, saying the institution, once respected globally, had become a "symbol of anarchy under the TMC."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi being garlanded during the Vijay Sankalp rally at Jadavpur in Kolkata where he was campaigning *—ANI*

"Jadavpur University was once spoken of with great respect. But today, people are being threatened, and students are being forced to protest," he said.

Rebutting Modi's comments, JUTA said, "Jadavpur University was born out of the anti-British movement and carries forward the legacy of India's freedom struggle."

"Despite severe financial constraints, it has got global recognition as a centre of excellence through the efforts of students, faculty, researchers, staff, officials and alumni," said the statement signed by JUTA Secretary Partha Pratim Roy.

It claimed that funds under the Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) have not been released to the university by the Centre, while the state has also not addressed the issue of fund constraints.

- Jadavpur University was born from the anti-British movement and carries forward the legacy of India's freedom struggle, the Jadavpur University Teachers Association's Secretary Partha Pratim Roy said

The JUTA also expressed concern over alleged moves to dismantle the University Grants Commission, which it said would halt Central funding for public institutions.

It accused the Centre of "undermining public universities while extending support to private institutions such as Jio Institute." *— PTI*

The relatives of those killed in a firing during a protest cry as they receive the bodies at the RIMS mortuary in Imphal on Friday *— PTI*

Manipur protesters march to CM's house, fight cops

IMPHAL, 25 APRIL

Thousands of people demanding permanent peace in Manipur clashed with the police on Saturday as they were prevented from marching towards the chief minister's residence here.

However, a group were later allowed to meet Chief Minister Y Khemchand Singh and they submitted a memorandum.

The protesters, organised under the Meitei organisation COCOMI (Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity) took out four different rallies, which were, however, stopped ahead of the CM's bungalow in the Babupara area.

Additional security forces were deployed and barricades were put up on all four directions leading to the CM's residence, including Keisampat junction, Kangla Gate, Konung Mamang and Moirangkhom in the heart of Imphal, officials said.

At Khurai Lamlong in Imphal East district, nearly 2 km from the CM's bungalow, security forces fired several rounds of tear gas shells to disperse the protesters.

The mob raised slogans and held placards demanding justice for the two children killed in a recent bomb blast in Bishnupur district and rehabilitation of the internally displaced persons affected by the ethnic conflict

- The mob raised slogans and held placards demanding justice for the two children killed in a recent bomb blast in Bishnupur district and rehabilitation of the internally displaced persons affected by the ethnic conflict

COCOMI convenor YK Dhiren, after meeting the CM, told reporters, that the organisation will intensify protests.

Meanwhile, three persons were arrested with 5 kg of heroin in Manipur's Churachandpur district, police said on Saturday. The arrests were made in Bolkot in the Singngat police station area.

The arrested men are Nengmuanlal and Ginlamthang Guite of M Buangmun village and Hangkhanlian of Gurugram in Haryana. Heroin weighing 5.43 kg has been seized from them, the police statement said. *— PTI*

Female loco pilot alleges sexual assault by senior

NEW DELHI, 25 APRIL

A female assistant loco pilot from the Salem Division of Southern Railway has demanded strong action against a chief loco inspector after being allegedly sexually assaulted by him.

The incident occurred on 13 September 2025 during an examination for an orientation course. Based on an initial complaint from the woman, the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) recommended merely transferring and issuing a warning to the accused officer.

"Chief Loco Inspector T Selvaraj allegedly touched her head, shoulder, thigh, hip and lip," the ICC said while recording the woman's statement.

However, the woman, in her appeal before the Salem Divisional Railway Manager, said, "The incident was not mere touching. Rather, it constituted aggravated sexual harassment and assault with intent to outrage my modesty, as defined under Sections 74 and 75 of BNS."

- The incident was not mere touching. Rather, it constituted aggravated sexual harassment and assault with intent to outrage my modesty, as defined under Sections 74 and 75 of BNS, the woman said in her complaint

In her initial complaint, the woman had alleged that after finding her alone during the examination for the orientation course, Selvaraj allegedly sexually assaulted her. Based on this, the Salem Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer appointed the ICC.

The victim told the committee that after completing the examination, when she returned home, Selvaraj called her and apologised, and requested her to "forget" the incident.

Corroborating these claims through call recordings submitted by the woman, in its report, the committee said that Selvaraj had accepted all the charges.

The ICC recommended transferring Selvaraj from the Salem Division's Erode depot and issuing a strict warning of stringent action in case of any recurrence of similar misconduct. *— PTI*

YouTuber convicted in 1995 murder case arrested

NEW DELHI, 25 APRIL

The Delhi police arrested a 54-year-old man, who had allegedly been living under a false identity and was known locally as a social activist and YouTuber, in connection with a kidnapping-murder case 31 years ago, an official said on Saturday. The accused, Salim Khan alias Salim Ahmed, also known as Salim Wastik, was apprehended from Loni in UP.

Khan was convicted in 1997 along with his associate Anil for the kidnapping and murder of the 13-year-old son of a cement businessman in north-east Delhi."The boy was abducted in January 1995 and a ransom of Rs 30,000 was demanded," police said.

Suspicion fell on Salim Khan, who was then working as a martial arts instructor at the boy's school. *— PTI*

Probe Ghazipur Dalit's rape & murder: Rahul

NEW DELHI, 25 APRIL

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi demanded a high-level investigation into the alleged rape and murder of a girl of the Vishwakarma community in UP's Ghazipur.

In a post on X on Saturday, he said in a state where parents have to beg even to get an FIR filed for their daughter, the country's government has no moral right to remain in power. He also sought immediate action against the guilty police officers and said the family of the deceased must get protection.

"In Ghazipur, UP, after the rape and murder of a daughter of the Vishwakarma community, there were threats and violence to stop the family from filing an FIR. Hathras, Kathua, Unnao and now Ghazipur," he said in his post in Hindi on X.

He said every time, it is the same face and the victim is a Dalit, backward, tribal or poor.

"Every time, it is protection for the criminal and persecution for the victim. Every time it is the same silence from those in power," he added.

Posing questions to Prime Minister Modi and Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath, he asked, "Modi ji, Chief Minister ji, give a response — why are daughters so unsafe in your rule?"

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra also said that in Ghazipur, the reluctance to file a case in the murder of a girl, followed by threats to the victim's family and chaos spread by the powerful, shows that atrocities against women in the state have reached their peak.

A teenage girl's body was found in Karanda area in Ghazipur district on 15 April. Her family alleged sexual assault and murder. *— PTI*

Cops recreate Delhi rape-murder case scene

NEW DELHI, 25 APRIL

Crime scene recreation is underway at the Delhi residence where the alleged rape and murder of the 22-year-old daughter of a senior IRS officer took place on 22 April.

The iPhone stolen from the victim has been recovered from a park. The police also conducted a potency test on the suspect, said the source.

The 22-year-old woman, an engineering graduate and UPSC hopeful, was raped and murdered at her residence in the Kailash Hills locality on Wednesday. Police found that the suspect, Rahul Meena, who had been a domestic help at the residence, used his familiarity with the house to enter the flat. Police are planning a detailed psychological assessment of the suspect to evaluate his mental state, noting that he has exhibited psychopathic tendencies and a history of violent conduct.

The psychological analysis may involve clinical evaluation by experts to assess aggression levels, emotional responses and personality traits. Investigators are probing whether the crime was premeditated, with officials saying Meena's psychological profiling will help understand his mental state.

A search is underway for his phone, which police said he had pawned for Rs 20,000. An officer said that if the phone is found, it could be a "breakthrough" in tracking his contacts. Police are also examining his two social media profiles and chats. *— PTI*

RIRI IN MUMBAI

Global pop sensation Rihanna poses with paparazzi in Mumbai on Friday. She came for launching 'Fenty Beauty' and is hosted by the Ambanis *—PTI*

High UV in Keralam, people advised caution

TPURAM, 25 APRIL

High levels of UV radiation continued to be recorded across Kerala, the Kerala State Disaster Management Authority (KSDMA) said on Saturday. As per data shared by the authority, ultraviolet (UV) levels above eight, warranting an orange alert, were reported at Konni in Pathanamthitta, Chengannur in Alappuzha, Changanassery in Kottayam and Munnar.

KSDMA said that high UV levels are recorded between 10 am and 3 pm and therefore, people should try to avoid direct sunlight during these hours. The authority has recommended hats, umbrellas, sunglasses and the wearing of cotton clothes that cover the entire body when going outside during day. *— PTI*

WHILE GAMING ONLINE

Man asks Akshay's 12-yr-old daughter for nude pics, held

MUMBAI, 25 APRIL

The Maharashtra Cyber Department on Friday revealed that they have made an arrest in the cyber harassment case involving movie star Akshay Kumar's daughter, Nitara Kumar.

The 13-year-old was allegedly asked to send her nude photos by an unknown individual while playing an online game, Yashasvi Yadav, ADGP, Maharashtra Cyber Department said.

Way back in October 2025, Akshay had spoken about this.

"I would like to share an incident with you, which happened at my home a few months ago. My daughter was playing a video game with a stranger. When you are playing, you get messages saying, 'Thank you, that was great' or 'You are doing good' etc. Suddenly, the person said, 'Where are you from?' She wrote, 'Mumbai'. The person then told her, 'Well played. You did very well'. Then a message came, 'Are you male or female?' She replied, 'Female'. And then, he sent a message, 'Can you send me a nude picture of yours? My daughter switched off and told my wife. It was great that she spoke to my wife about it. This is also cybercrime. Sometimes money has to be given. There are many suicides. It is very important that our children learn about this," Akshay had said. *— Agencies*

Docu ban: Bishnoi gang threatens Punjab politicians

CHANDIGARH, 25 APRIL

Gurdaspur MP Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa has allegedly received a threatening message from the Lawrence Bishnoi gang after he spoke out against the release of the documentary 'Lawrence of Punjab.'

Randhawa, who had demanded a ban on the web series along with other leaders, said he had informed Punjab DGP Gaurav Yadav about the threat.

He alleged that gangsters were operating with the "patronage of Central agencies," and asked how Lawrence Bishnoi, currently lodged in Sabarmati Jail in Gujarat, was able to conduct operations outside prison. He also claimed that gangster Jaggu Bhagwanpuria, lodged in Dibrugarh Jail, was openly using a mobile phone.

Apart from Randhawa, similar WhatsApp messages were sent to Punjab Congress chief Amarinder Singh Raja Warring, Shiromani Akali Dal leader Bikram Singh Majithia, and Balkaur Singh, the father of slain singer Sidhu Moosewala

Reacting strongly, Warring said the Punjab Congress party would continue its fight against gangsterism and asserted that achieving a "gangster-free Punjab" would be a top priority for the party and its cadres. *— Agencies*

OT attendant conducts surgery, suspended

NARMADAPURAM, 25 APRIL

An operation theatre attendant has been suspended after allegedly performing a surgical procedure on a woman at a civil hospital in Pipariya, Madhya Pradesh. The incident, which took place eight days ago, came to light after the victim, a resident of Singanama village, complained to the block medical officer.

District CMO Dr Narsingh Gehlot confirmed that the patient lodged a complaint two days ago, and the matter was referred to him. The OT attendant, Barsati Lal Manjhi, is under suspension.

Sources said Manjhi allegedly removed a lump from the patient's breast without authorisation, in the absence of a surgeon. *—PTI*

FROM NE INDIA TO ISRAEL

Around 250 people from Northeast India, belonging to the Bnei Menashe, a group claiming descent from a biblical lost tribe, arrived in Israel on 23 April under 'Operation Wings of Dawn'. Hailing from Manipur and Mizoram, the group was welcomed with traditional songs, marking the first batch under a plan to relocate nearly 6,000 people by 2030, with 1,200 more expected this year. The move comes amid ongoing ethnic violence in Manipur. The immigrants will settle in northern Israel, where they will undergo Orthodox conversion and Hebrew training —*PTI*

18 yrs after Tata exit, Singur votes on lost promises

In 2008, Tata Motors withdrew from its small-car project in Singur after months of intense protests over land acquisition —*PTI*

On the edge of Singur, one of West Bengal's most politically charged landscapes, men sift through the earth for rusted iron rods — remnants of the abandoned Tata Motors Nano factory — to sell as scrap. Nearly two decades after the project was scrapped, the land remains caught between two failures: agriculture that no longer yields as before, and an industry that never materialised.

In 2008, Tata Motors withdrew from its small-car project in Singur after months of intense protests over land acquisition. The decision reshaped Bengal's political trajectory, contributing to the collapse of the Left Front's 34-year rule and propelling Mamata Banerjee to power in 2011. Yet, in Singur itself, what was once hailed as a victory has slowly given way to disillusionment.

"Neither agriculture happened, nor did industry," says 93-year-old former TMC MLA Rabindranath Bhattacharya, known locally as 'Mastermoshai'. A key figure in the Singur movement, he recalls how around 1,000 acres of fertile, multi-crop land were acquired in 2006 by the Left Front government for the Nano project. Banerjee built a mass movement around the claim that unwilling farmers were being dispossessed — a campaign that would redefine state politics.

When Ratan Tata announced the relocation of the Nano plant to Sanand in Gujarat in October 2008, it marked more than the exit of a factory. It signalled a turning point that would ultimately see Banerjee assume office at Writers' Buildings after the 2011 Assembly elections, riding on anti-land acquisition movements in Singur and Nandigram.

However, the return of lan, ordered by the Supreme Court in 2016 to be handed back to "unwilling" farmers, has not restored livelihoods. While the ruling was celebrated as a moral and political vindication, its implementation has proved uneven. Large tracts remain scarred by concrete debris, buried iron and invasive weeds. In many places, the topsoil removed during initial construction was never replaced.

"I spent Rs 1.5 lakh just to clear my three bighas," says farmer Ashish Bera. "Earlier, we grew paddy, jute, potatoes and vegetables. The land was rich. Now it barely produces anything."

The irony is stark in a region located within the Hooghly river basin, flanked by the Damodar and Saraswati rivers — an area once known for intensive cultivation of paddy, vegetables and flowers. For many, the land returned is more symbolic than productive.

Mahadev Das, once a prominent face of the anti-land agitation, now spends his days at a tea stall overlooking the barren fields. "I had 12 bighas, tractors, power tillers and pumps. I had built a whole business around that land. Now I have nothing. We did not fight for this concrete-infested land," he says.

Perhaps the most striking shift is in public sentiment. Many who once opposed the factory now openly admit they were mistaken. Bikas Das, now a driver, was once a frontline protester. "We were told industry must not come up on multi-crop land. We believed it. Today, we are deprived of everything. Had the factory stayed, I would have had a job," he says.

Among younger residents, the regret is sharper. Sathi Das, a postgraduate working at a call centre in Kolkata, says her father was among those who refused compensation. "We got the land back, but it is not fit for cultivation. If the factory had stayed, we would not have had to leave Singur," she says. Many youths trained for jobs at the Nano plant now work as app-based drivers, in small manufacturing units, or have migrated out of the state.

As the April 29 election approaches, Singur is once again a political battleground. The constituency has 2,42,087 voters, down from 2,51,585 in 2024. Scheduled Castes make up over 15 per cent of the electorate, Muslims around 11.5 per cent, and nearly two-thirds of voters live in rural areas.

Despite visible discontent, Singur remains a TMC stronghold, with the party winning five consecutive elections here. In 2021, sitting MLA Becharam Manna defeated Bhattacharya — then with the BJP — by over 25,000 votes. The TMC also led in the constituency during the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

"The people of Singur know who stood by them when their land was being taken," says Manna. "There are still issues, but roads, welfare schemes and compensation have reached every household."

The BJP, however, senses an opening. "Singur once voted to save land. Now people will vote for jobs. The TMC used Singur to come to power and then abandoned it," says a local party leader.

Recent rallies by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee have brought the spotlight back to Singur, but residents remain sceptical. "They come and go. No one says what will happen to this land," says Bhattacharya.

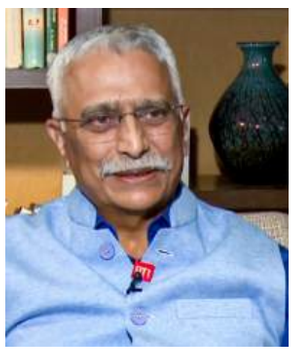
Singur today embodies a deeper political dilemma. For the TMC, advocating industrialisation risks reopening the very contradictions that fuelled its rise. For the BJP, pushing for investment raises the same contentious questions over land acquisition that once unseated the Left. —*PTI*

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR سالار

Unwarranted to drag me into memoir row: Naravane



Former Army chief Gen Manoj Naravane has come out with two books since his unpublished memoir, 'Four Stars of Destiny', caused a controversy earlier this year and looking back, he said it was "not warranted" to unnecessarily quote and drag him into the limelight for the book.

The general, who recently released 'The Curious and the Classified: Unearthing Military Myths and Mysteries', said that he has moved on since then and has already written two books and a third will soon be released.

"The Ministry of Defence had asked the publisher to put it on hold till it was vetted. As far as I am concerned the matter rested there, and I have moved on…so that is a closed chapter. And unnecessarily quoting me and dragging the unpublished book into the limelight and indirectly me to the limelight was I think not warranted," Naravane told PTI Videos in an interview.

In February this year, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi was stopped from citing excerpts from the memoir in the Lok Sabha, as it had not yet been published.

Naravane's writing career has taken a turn since the episode, as his latest book is "supposed to be an entertaining read and not a serious academic endeavour".

'The Curious and the Classified: Unearthing Military Myths and Mysteries', published by Rupa Publications, explores some of the most riveting nuggets about the legends and lore of the Indian Army, Navy and Air Force.

Naravane in the book traces the origins of the ubiquitous military greeting "Jai Hind" from the freedom movement to its adoption by the Indian armed forces.

He said that "Jai Hind" was first used by the Indian Air Force and only later embraced by the Army and Navy, adding that the standard practice of saluting was originally silent, with regiments adding their own greetings like "Sat Sri Akal" or "Ram Ram".

"It was initially the Air Force that started saying 'Jai Hind', and we have now followed that across all three services. With the salute we say 'Jai Hind', and even in lectures we greet with 'Jai Hind'.

"But where does this 'Jai Hind' come from? You realise it has got much deeper roots. And that was a revelation to me also. So it was something even I did not know about, I must have said 'Jai Hind' a million times," Naravane said.

The former Army chief delves into the legends of Badluram, a soldier of the Assam Regiment, and a military mule, named Pedongi.

Badluram died in the Battle of Kohima in 1944 but rations allotted to him kept arriving after his death, helping the besieged company to survive the war.

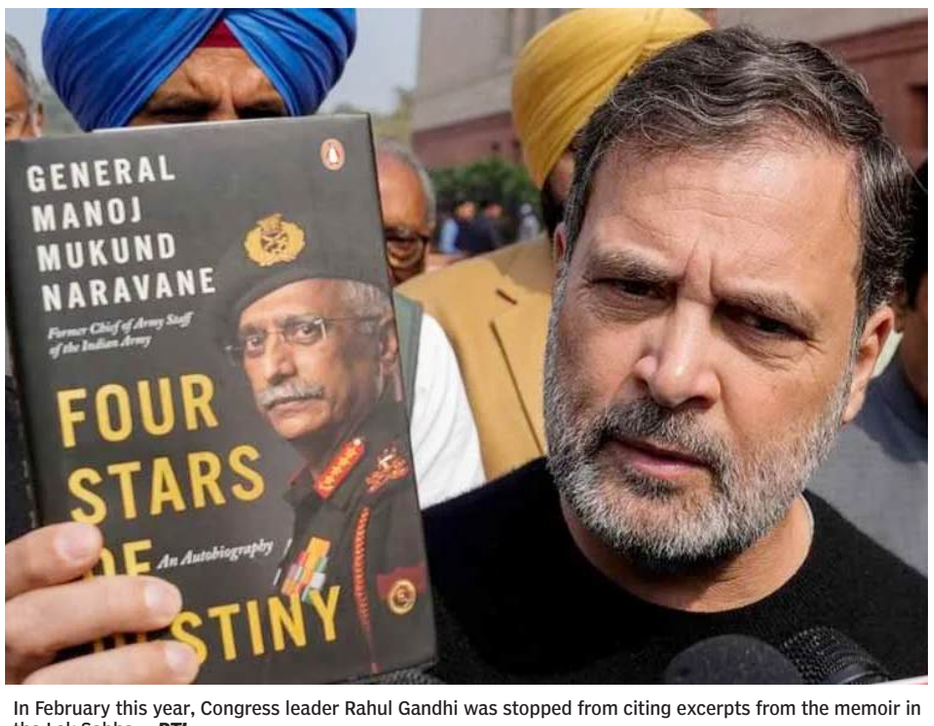
The story inspired British Indian Army officer Major MT Proktor to write a foot-tapping song, 'Badluram ka Badan', that has become the unofficial regimental anthem of the Assam Regiment and is sung at their functions.

"...the lyrics go 'Badluram ka badan zameen ke neeche hai. Lekin uska ration hum khaate hain' and it became a very famous song. It is a very footstumping song and you can dance to it and it raises your morale. Although people have heard the song, very few know it has got such deep roots in an actual battle which turned the tide of probably the Indian course of history," he said.

On the legendary mule Pedongi, captured by Pakistan in 1971, which escaped and returned to its unit through minefields, Naravane said the animal was honoured with retirement and served 37 years.

"The Pakistanis started using it to carry their loads and at one point of time this particular mule had a machine gun and some ammunition loaded on it and it decided to comeback home. It escaped its captors, negotiated the treacherous terrain and the mine fields, and came back to its unit through sheer homing instinct," the general recalled.

"In a way it was an act of valor, bravery, and loyalty. It was then showered with honours and awards and it was also decided that it would no longer carry any loads unlike any other mules and was put into sort of retirement till it died of natural causes after 37 years at Bareilly," he added. –*PTI*



In February this year, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi was stopped from citing excerpts from the memoir in the Lok Sabha —*PTI*

Mythos sparks global alarm over financial system vulnerabilities

- Banks and financial institutions are most vulnerable as there is high interconnected (payments, markets, clearing systems) and dependence on legacy IT systems operating in real-time.

Anthropic's AI model Mythos has raised a global debate over vulnerability in the financial system as the model has the capability to find weaknesses in their operating system and launch a potential cyberattack.

Mythos' advanced coding capabilities give it an unprecedented potential to detect cybersecurity weaknesses and develop methods to exploit them, sparking concerns that it could be used to disrupt banking systems.

Regulators across Asia, Europe and the United States have already warned banks to review their defences and preparedness.

Mythos has raised alarm bells among regulators, who see it as a significant challenge to the banking sector and its legacy technology systems.

Banks and financial institutions are most vulnerable as there is high interconnected (payments, markets, clearing systems) and dependence on legacy IT systems operating in real-time.

One successful cyberattack can cascade quickly across institutions and markets as one bank is linked to many domestic and global institution for inward and outward payment, forex trading, money market exposure, stock market linkage, depositories and payment gateway, etc.

GENESIS OF THREAT

The pilot launch of Claude Mythos on April 7 raised global concern with regard to their potential hacking capacity. During tests, Anthropic, the US-based artificial intelligence company, found that the latest model was highly skilled at cyber-security and hacking tasks, outperforming humans.

"Mythos preview has already found thousands of high-severity vulnerabilities, including some in every major operating system and web browser," Anthropic claimed.

Anthropic gave 12 tech companies access via Project Glasswing, which it described as "an effort to secure the world's most critical software".

According to reports, the company also said unauthorised access was made on its new model Mythos, which is deemed too dangerous for public release.

GLOBAL CONCERNS AND DISCUSSIONS

The impact of new AI models on the financial sector was also discussed by policymakers and the central bankers at the IMF-World Bank meeting earlier this month and guardrails that could be put to protect stability in the financial system.

Globally, the European Central Bank, the Bank of England, and the IMF chief have raised alarm over the cyber security posed by Mythos to the global monetary system.

INDIA ASSESSES PREPAREDNESS OF FINANCIAL SYSTEM

Concerned over the cybersecurity risks, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Minister for Electronics and Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw on Thursday convened a high-level meeting with heads of banks to assess emerging threats linked to advanced artificial intelligence models, amid global concerns over Anthropic's Claude Mythos system and its potential implications for financial data security.

Sitharaman asked banks to take all necessary pre-emptive measures to secure their IT systems, safeguard customer data, and protect monetary resources.

"It was advised that a robust mechanism for real-time threat intelligence sharing may be established among banks, @IndianCERT and other relevant agencies so that emerging threats are identified early and disseminated across the ecosystem without delay," the finance ministry had said in a post on X after the meeting.

Banks were further advised to immediately report any suspicious activity or cyber incident to the relevant authorities, including the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), and to maintain close coordination with all agencies concerned, it said. These recommendations were given during a high-level meeting chaired by the finance minister with banks and key stakeholders with a view to assessing the potential impact of emerging threats linked to recent developments in AI models, particularly the possibility of such technologies being misused to weaponise software vulnerabilities.

The meeting assumed significance in view of the development of the Claude Mythos AI model by Anthropic, claiming that it has found vulnerabilities in many major operating systems.

During the meeting, the finance minister urged the Indian Banks' Association (IBA) to develop a coordinated institutional mechanism to respond swiftly and effectively to any such threats. She also directed banks to engage the best available cybersecurity professionals and specialised agencies to continuously strengthen the defensive and monitoring capabilities of banks. The finance minister on Friday said that all the lenders have been asked to work together on it under the leadership of SBI chairman C S Setty, who also chairs the Indian Banks' Association.

"In the coming weeks, there will be a lot of interaction within the banks, understanding where more investments will have to be made, what kind of technologies can come in, how AI itself can be used for countering this AI challenge," Sitharaman said. —*PTI*

US-Iran talks in limbo; Pak under lockdown

Trump says he is not sending Witkoff & Kushner for talks, Pak hopes for deal to be reached soon

ISLAMABAD, 25 APRIL

Large parts of Pakistan's capital remained under a tight security lockdown on Saturday, with uncertainty persisting over a proposed second round of talks between the United States and Iran.

Later in the day, US President Donald Trump told Fox News that he is no longer sending envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner to Pakistan for Iran talks.

Key roads into Islamabad were sealed and the Red Zone, housing major government buildings and diplomatic missions, remained under strict security. In the commercial Blue Area, markets were largely deserted, cafes faced supply shortages, and suspended public transport left commuters stranded.

The restrictions, reimposed after an earlier lockdown on 11–12 April, coincide with the visit of Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, who arrived late Friday for talks with Pakistan's leadership. On Saturday, Araghchi met Army chief Field Marshal Asim Munir; officials, however, released no details of the discussions. He left Pakistan in te evening.

Pakistan's Field Marshal Asim Munir and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar welcome Iran's Abbas Araghchi in Islamabad—*PTI*

Despite expectations of renewed diplomacy, there was no confirmation of direct US–Iran talks. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baqaei said no such meeting was planned and that Tehran's position would instead be conveyed through Pakistan.

In contrast, the White House said US envoy Steve Witkoff and presidential adviser Jared Kushner were expected to travel to Pakistan for possible engagements, though the American delegation had not arrived at the time of reporting. A US logistics and security team is already in Islamabad.

Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar expressed hope for "meaningful engagements" to advance regional peace.

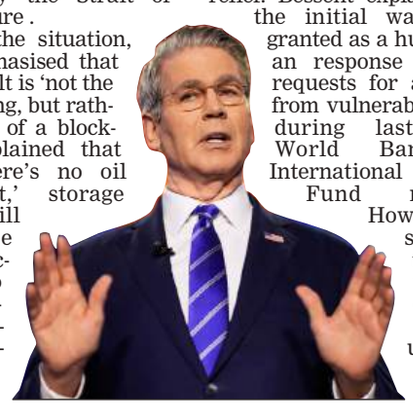
Meanwhile, President Asif Ali Zardari departed for a multi-day visit to China, where he will hold talks focused on economic cooperation and the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor, as both countries mark 75 years of diplomatic ties. —*PTI*

US WON'T RENEW IRANIAN, RUSSIAN OIL WAIVERS: BESSENT

WASHINGTON, 25 APRIL

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said on Friday that the US does not plan to renew a waiver for Russian oil and petroleum currently at sea. He said a renewal of the one-time waiver for Iranian oil at sea is 'totally off the table.' Bessent's statements come amid the US-Israeli war in Iran, and global energy markets being ensnarled by the Strait of Hormuz closure .

Clarifying the situation, Bessent emphasised that the supply halt is 'not the Iranians' doing, but rather the result of a blockade. He explained that because 'there's no oil coming out,' storage capacity will soon be reached, forcing Iran to 'start shuttering production'—a process he warned would be 'very bad for their wells.



The US originally issued a waiver for Russian oil sales and petroleum products in March, intended to stabilise global energy markets after crude oil prices surged above USD 100 per barrel. The Treasury Department renewed the waiver two days after Bessent said that he had no plans to extend the sanctions relief. Bessent explained that the initial waiver was granted as a humanitarian response following requests for assistance from vulnerable nations during last week's World Bank and International Monetary Fund meetings. However, he signalled that further extensions are unlikely. —*PTI*

Iran executes man over alleged Mossad links

DUBAI, 25 APRIL

Iran hanged a man on Saturday over alleged ties to Israel's Mossad and his involvement in protests in January. Erfan Kiani was the latest to face execution after Iran's recent wave of arrests following nationwide protests and war. The Mizan news agency stated Kiani was convicted of charges including attacks on security forces in Asfahn. The agency claimed he was on a "mission for Mossad" without providing evidence. Human rights groups say Iran often conducts secretive trials denying defendants proper defence. Several executions of alleged spies, protesters, and members of the exiled opposition have occurred recently, raising international concern over Iran's justice practices.—*PTI*

Suspected Somali pirates hijack oil tanker

MOGADISHU, 25 APRIL

Suspected Somali pirates seized a fuel tanker off the northeastern coast of Somalia, according to local officials and the British military. The vessel was hijacked on Wednesday between Hafun and Bandarbeyla in Puntland's waters. It was en route from Berbera to Mogadishu when intercepted, said a Puntland Maritime Police Force colonel who spoke anonymously. The British UK Maritime Trade Operations confirmed the hijacking, stating unauthorised individuals were manoeuvring the vessel south within Somali waters. The ship, owned by Pakistani interests and chartered locally, was carrying a large fuel shipment. Authorities are under pressure to secure the vessel's release, with no ransom demands yet confirmed. Piracy along Somalia's coast has fluctuated, with incidents sporadic despite a decline over the past decade.—*PTI*

US military strikes alleged drug vessel, two killed

WASHINGTON, 25 APRIL

The US military announced a strike on a boat suspected of drug trafficking in the eastern Pacific, killing two individuals. Since September, the Trump administration has targeted vessels believed to be involved in drug smuggling, with at least 183 deaths reported. The military has not confirmed the vessels were carrying drugs. The campaign, which began as the US increased its regional military presence, intensified ahead of the January raid that captured ex-Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. A video posted on X showed a boat in flames after an explosion. President Trump stated the US is "in armed conflict" with Latin American cartels, justifying the strikes to curb drug flow.—*PTI*

— WIKIPEDIA

Gayatri's astronomy computer to be auctioned

LONDON, 25 APRIL

A 17th-century brass astrolabe, a hand-held astronomical computer from Maharani Gayatri Devi's collection, will be auctioned at Sotheby's next week. The device, dating to 1612, is expected to fetch between £1.5m and £2.5m. It was made by two brothers for a Mughal nobleman in Lahore and is the largest of its kind. The intricate instrument features 94 cities, 38 star pointers, five plates, and fine degree divisions. Inscribed with Persian and Sanskrit star names, it could tell time, map stars, locate the sun, find Mecca, and navigate. The astrolabe reflects Lahore's early 17th-century craft, passed down through generations of the Lahore School. It is a rare blend of artistry and science, with only a few surviving examples.—*PTI*

Germany to deploy minesweepers

Germany plans to deploy minesweeper ships to the Mediterranean, which could later be redeployed to Hormuz, German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius said. The minesweeper will also include a command and a supply ship, Pistorius added. He did not say exactly when the ships are scheduled to depart, especially as such a mission would need to be approved by Germany's Parliament. Pistorius said German units will be deployed soon to avoid delays once the mandate is approved.

Mojtaba commands via letters: Report

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei has remained largely out of public view since taking over after his father's death in a reported US-Israel strike on 28 February. According to The New York Times, his directives are issued via social media or read on state television, while sensitive messages are handwritten and passed through a "human chain" of couriers to evade tracking. The report said he was gravely injured and is undergoing treatment, though Iran has dismissed such claims.

EU mulls Gulf ties amid energy crisis

Faced with soaring oil prices due to the Iran war, the European Union is exploring alternative energy routes in West Asia. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced on Friday that the EU is willing to partner with Persian Gulf nations to diversify export infrastructure and bypass tahe Strait of Hormuz bottleneck. The EU also offered to assist in repairing war-damaged energy facilities.

The Daily Star and other newspapers said the alert was issued after the recent arrest of a banned militant outfit operative —*PTI*

B'desh on alert for likely terror strikes

DHAKA, 25 APRIL

Bangladesh Police has issued a nationwide security alert over possible militant attacks on key installations, including the parliament complex, officials and media reports said on Saturday.

'The alert has been issued based on intelligence reports,' a police headquarters (PHQ) official said, requesting anonymity. The official described the alert as 'urgent and confidential'.

A PHQ letter warned of possible coordinated attacks targeting the parliament complex, places of worship, entertainment facilities, and military and police installations, with armouries seen as potential targets, Bengali daily Prothom Alo reported.

The Daily Star and other newspapers said the alert was issued after the recent arrest of a banned militant outfit operative, Istiak Ahmed Sami alias Abu Bakkar, who was allegedly in contact with two dismissed military personnel.

According to reports, the letter also included profiles of two alleged key planners behind the potential attacks, but did not name any organisation.

It described the suspected perpetrators as "extremely dangerous for the overall security of the country".

Officials earlier said hundreds of inmates, including death row convicts and Islamists, still remained fugitive since a series of jail breaks during the July Uprising.

Criminal Investigation Department (CID), Special Branch (SB), and Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crimes (CTTC) besides regular police across the country have been asked to remain on high alert. —*PTI*

Gunfire, blasts rock Mali as attackers hit capital, cities

BAMAKO, APRIL 25

Gunfire was heard near Mali's international airport in the capital Bamako early Saturday, an Associated Press reporter and residents said.

It was not immediately clear what caused the gunshots, and no armed group has claimed responsibility for the attack.

A journalist in Bamako heard sustained heavy weapons and automatic rifle gunfire coming from Modibo Keita International Airport, around 15 kilometres (9 miles) from the city centre, and saw a helicopter over nearby neighbourhoods. The airport is adjacent

to an air base used by Mali's air force.

A Bamako resident living near the airport also reported gunfire and three helicopters patrolling overhead. The resident spoke on condition of anonymity out of fear for his security.

In 2024, an al-Qaida-linked group claimed an attack on Bamako's airport and a military training camp in the capital, killing scores of people.

Mali, alongside neighbouring Niger and Burkina Faso, has long been battling armed groups affiliated with al-Qaida and the Islamic State group.

Following military coups, the juntas in the three countries have turned from Western allies to Russia for help in combating Islamic militants.

But the security situation in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso has worsened in recent times, analysts say, with a record number of attacks by militants. —*PTI*

ONE HELD IN DEADLY SHOOTING AT MALL IN LOUISIANA

BATON ROUGE, 25 APRIL

Louisiana authorities have charged a 17-year-old with murder, and they are searching for another suspect after bystanders were caught in the crossfire of a shooting at a mall in Baton Rouge on Thursday that killed one teenage girl.

During a news conference Friday, Louisiana Gov. Jeff Landry vowed to crack down on gang violence that has plagued the capital city.

The tough-on-crime governor, who said he spoke with FBI Director Kash Patel, promised to utilise state, local and federal resources to address the issue and that

A man lights a candle during a prayer vigil for the victims of a mass shooting in Louisiana —*PTI*

consequences "are going to start being felt immediately."

Landry said he is asking all levels and sectors of law enforcement to 'prepare for a targeted warrant sweep' for anyone connected to the mall shooting and focus on the 'neighbourhoods of these individuals'. —*PTI*

Russian attacks kill 4 in Ukraine

KYIV, 25 APRIL

Russian drone and missile attacks on the Ukrainian city of Dnipro resulted in at least four deaths and 21 injuries, local authorities confirmed Saturday.

The bodies of the victims were recovered from the ruins of a house destroyed during the overnight strikes, according to Dnipropetrovsk regional head Oleksandr Ganzha. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy reported that "11 people in hospitals in Dnipro" were being treated after the attack. Ganzha added on Telegram that "the Russians have been hitting Dnipro and other cities and communities practically all night," causing fires and partial destruction of apartments, businesses, and private homes. In the Odesa region, two people were wounded in drone attacks, damaging residential buildings, port infrastructure, and vehicles, regional head Oleh Kiper said.

On the Russian side, a woman was killed, and a man was seriously wounded by a drone strike in Belgorod, officials reported. Romania's defence ministry said drone fragments were found in Galati, near the border with Ukraine, but no casualties were reported. The attacks followed a prisoner swap where Russia and Ukraine exchanged 193 service members. —PTI

IN 1ST VISIT TO STATES

King Charles to celebrate US-UK bond

LONDON, 25 APRIL

King Charles III will seek to reinforce longstanding US-UK ties during his upcoming state visit, despite tensions over Britain's stance on US military action against Iran.

The four-day visit to Washington, New York and Virginia comes as Prime Minister Keir Starmer faces criticism for declining to support US President Donald Trump's Iran policy. However, experts say the monarch's role is to rise above politics and highlight enduring bonds between the two nations.

Charles is expected to follow the example of his mother, Queen Elizabeth II, who during her 1991 address to the US Congress celebrated shared democratic values and historic links. His speech is likely to

stress the "special relationship", American history, and the importance of long-term alliances over short-term political differences.

The visit coincides with celebrations marking America's 250th anniversary and will include a commemoration of the September 11 attacks, a ceremony honouring fallen service members, and cultural events, including one marking 100 years of Winnie-the-Pooh.

Royal visits to the US have historically played a diplomatic role. From King George VI's landmark 1939 trip to Elizabeth II's multiple visits during periods of conflict, such engagements have helped maintain public and political goodwill. Despite current strains, Trump has spoken warmly of Charles, and observers expect cordial engagements.

Sensitive issues — including Prince Andrew's links to Jeffrey Epstein and Prince Harry's estrangement from the monarchy — are expected to be avoided. Analysts note that while political disagreements persist, the visit is carefully choreographed to underscore shared history. —*PTI*

MJ faces fresh abuse lawsuit amid biopic opener

WASHINGTON DC, 25 APRIL

A new lawsuit has been filed against the estate of Michael Jackson, alleging sexual abuse of four children by a family once known as his "second family", even as his biopic 'Michael' opens strongly at the global box office.

According to reports by The Hollywood Reporter and The New York Times, Dominic and Connie Cascio and their children claim the alleged abuse occurred over several years at Neverland Ranch, during trips and at tour stops. The family had previously defended Jackson publicly, including in television appearances.

The lawsuit further alleges that the family had earlier approached Jackson's estate, resulting in a private settlement reportedly worth $16 million over five years. Payments allegedly ceased in 2025, leading to a breakdown in negotiations and the filing of the new complaint. The estate's lawyer, Marty Singer, dismissed the claims as a "desperate money grab" and accused the family of attempting to extract substantial sums. The complaint includes serious allegations of grooming, abuse and coercion. The family also said the 2019 documentary 'Leaving Neverland' prompted them to come forward. Jackson, who died in 2009, remains a polarising figure. —*ANI*

India's real estate demand is stable in Q1: Equirus

NEW DELHI, 25 APRIL

India's real estate sector saw stable demand absorbing supply despite a marginal slowdown in launches in Q1 2026, according to a report by Equirus. The report highlighted that leasing in the commercial segment rose 6 per cent year-on-year to 29.9 million square feet in Q1, compared to 28.2 million square feet in the same period last year. Meanwhile, new launches also rose sharply to 14 million square feet, showing a 154 per cent jump, the report noted. The report notes a shift toward younger buyers, with nearly 74 per cent of property purchasers now under 35 years. It adds that while demand remains strong, buyer behaviour and regional dynamics are evolving amid growing supply —*ANI*

-PTI

Textiles, garment exports fall 2.2% in FY26: GTRI

NEW DELHI, 25 APRIL

India's textiles and garment exports fell 2.2 per cent to USD 35.8 billion in 2025–26 due to a contraction in shipments of key segments, such as cotton, think tank GTRI said on Saturday. Founder Ajay Srivastava said India is exporting more domestically, but earning fewer dollars globally. In rupee terms, exports fell 2.1 per cent during the last fiscal. The contrast between INR and USD growth highlights a deeper structural concern, GTRI said. GTRI stated that this declining trend is visible across major segments: with cotton textiles falling by 3.9 per cent, ready-made garments by 1.4 per cent, and carpets by 5.3 per cent. Handicrafts grew by 1.5 per cent. —*PTI*

Paytm business strong despite RBI action on PPBL

PBBL operates independently, Paytm board not involved

NEW DELHI, 25 APRIL

Paytm and its services will continue to operate in an uninterrupted manner, the company assured –*FREEPIK*

India's leading payments app, Paytm (One 97 Communications Ltd), said the Reserve Bank of India's action on Paytm Payments Bank Ltd (PPBL) has no financial or business impact on the company, reiterating that it does not have any material business arrangements or exposure with the banking entity.

In a regulatory filing, the Noida-based fintech major said PPBL operates independently, with no board or management involvement from Paytm.

No services provided by the company are in partnership with PPBL.

Paytm also added that there is no financial impact on the company, since it had already impaired its investment in PPBL on 31 March, 2024.

It further clarified that none of its services are linked to PPBL and that all its offerings, including those by its subsidiary, continue to function normally.

Paytm and its services will continue to operate uninterrupted. These include the Paytm app, Paytm UPI, Paytm Gold and all other services offered by its subsidiaries and associated companies such as Paytm QR, Paytm Soundbox, Paytm card machines, and Paytm Payment Gateway, Paytm Money among others.

- In a regulatory filing, the Noida-based fintech major said PPBL operates independently, with no board or management involvement from Paytm. No services provided by the company are in partnership with PPBL.

Paytm has been doubling down on its core revenues, and has delivered three consecutive quarters of profit in FY26.

It reported a profit after tax of Rs 559 crore. Adjusting for a one-time Rs 190 crore charge related to a loan to its joint venture, Paytm First Games, profit after tax still stood at a sizable Rs 369 crore.

In the December quarter, Paytm reported a profit after taxof Rs 225 crore, an improvement of Rs 433 crore year-on-year. EBITDA for the quarter improved to Rs 156 crore with an EBITDA margin of 7 per cent.

Contribution profit stood at Rs 1,249 crore, up 30 per cent YoY with a contribution margin of 57 per cent.

Paytm's consumer UPI gross merchandise value grew 35 per cent in the last nine months versus industry gross merchandise growth of 19 per cent, the company said. —*PTI*

AI AIDING CYBERATTACKS

Amid Mythos concern, govt urges vigilance on cybersecurity

MUMBAI, 25 APRIL

Union Finance Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman** on Saturday urged all entities in the financial sector to be 'exceptionally vigilant' on cybersecurity.

Without naming Mythos, the newly minted platform from leading AI company Anthropic, Sitharaman said artificial intelligence tools are making cyberattacks faster and more adaptive.

Speaking at the 28th foundation day event of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi), she said such tools can also evade detection by deploying tactics like automated discovery of system vulnerabilities and malicious source-code interference, she added.

Heightened fears over the capabilities of Mythos have sent regulators and policymakers scrambling around the world to understand the platform and ways to safeguard their systems.

The government had called a meeting of top bankers with Ministers New Delhi where it announced the formation of a dedicated panel under SBI chairman C S Setty for the purpose.

PTI

Sitharaman warned that a single successful cyberattack on a major exchange, depository, or a large broker can disrupt markets on a national scale, erase wealth, and shake public confidence and urged Sebi to meet the emerging challenge of cybersecurity.

Sitharaman urged Sebi to institutionalise a system of periodic consultation with its peers across the world, making it clear that Indian regulations must not imitate other countries.

Sitharaman also exhorted the financial system to progress towards the goal of common know your customer (KYC) across all functions.

The Minister pitched for a soft-touch, public consultation-based approach to form principles-based rules rather than detailed rulebooks. She pushed to build an effective credit enhancement strategy. —*PTI*

ED raids Raheja in Rs 2,500 cr fraud

NEW DELHI, 25 APRIL

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Saturday conducted fresh searches against real estate company Raheja Developers as part of a money laundering investigation linked to alleged fraud of Rs 2,500 crores with home buyers.

About seven premises in Delhi-NCR are being covered as part of the action. The agency had raided the company, its promoters and some others in June 2025 too as part of a similar investigation.

The latest searches are being conducted in the matter of alleged fraud with the home buyers and non-delivery of flats to 4,500 buyers in its project 'Raheja Revanta',

The company, however, denied any wrongdoing or fraud committed by it in this project.

"The company has invested significantly more than customer collections, as confirmed by a RERA-supervised forensic audit, and no funds have been diverted.

"The project delay is primarily due to the lack of essential government infrastructure, despite full payment of EDC/IDC," Raheja Developers said in a statement.

It added that the possession for the 61-storey structure cannot be safely delivered without critical services like water, electricity, sewerage, and firefighting systems.

Raheja Developers has developed many housing projects in Delhi-NCR, especially Gurugram. —*PTI*

WORTH RS 2,500 CR

Adani to set up defence plant in MP

NEW DELHI, 25 APRIL

Union minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Saturday announced a Rs 2,500 crore defence arms manufacturing plant of the Adani group in Kolaras area of his Guna parliamentary constituency.

The plant will generate around 2,000 direct jobs, the Union Communications Minister said during a visit to Shivpuri-Kolaras area.

It would come up within two months near Kolaras, at the junction of Kota Highway and Mumbai-Gwalior Highway.

The defence equipment manufactured at the facility would contribute to protecting the country's borders, said Scindia.

Scindia said Kolaras, traditionally known for its agricultural output, particularly tomato production, is now poised to emerge as a key hub in India's defence manufacturing sector.

He further noted that the investment is likely to spur ancillary industries and economic activity in the region, creating additional livelihood opportunities for local businesses and entrepreneurs.

The Union Minister also inaugurated and laid the foundation stones for multiple infrastructure projects worth Rs 19.68 crore in Kolaras. Scindia laid the foundation stone of the Janpad Panchayat building and a sewage treatment plant. He also inaugurated a shopping complex and a bus stop. —*Agencies*

Gulf output has gone down by 14.5 million barrels or 57 per cent –*FREEPIK*

Gulf oil output hinges on Hormuz reopening: Goldman

NEW DELHI, 25 APRIL

Gulf crude oil production could largely recover within a few months of the Strait of Hormuz reopening, said a Goldman Sachs research report.

A full return to pre-war output is uncertain, given ongoing risks from waterway closures and regional instability in West Asia.

The investment bank estimated that Gulf output has gone down by 14.5 million barrels per day (mbd), or 57 per cent, compared to pre-war levels. Goldman estimates that available empty tanker capacity in the Gulf has fallen by about 50 per cent, or 130 million barrels, since the start of the conflict.

Recovery speed will depend on transport and well flow rates. After the strait reopens, limits will likely include pipeline capacity, tanker availability, and resource mobilisation.

Goldman cites three reasons for a solid near-term recovery: limited reported damage to oil fields, signs Saudi output can ramp up quickly, and a history of Saudi Arabia and the UAE using spare capacity to stabilise markets.

Goldman Sachs warned that the risk of "scarring" to oil production capacity could rise if hostilities resume —*ANI*

SEBI Chief calls for vision-led regulations for markets

MUMBAI, 25 APRIL

Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) chairman **Tuhin Kanta Pandey** highlighted the regulator's credibility built through reforms, collaboration, and investor trust, even as markets face geopolitical uncertainty, shifting trade, and technological change.

Speaking at Sebi's Foundation Day with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Pandey noted India's markets showed resilience, reflecting years of institution-building, regulation, and strong frameworks that sustain capital formation through turbulent times.

Since 12 April 1988, he said, Sebi evolved from open-outcry trading to real-time, technology-driven markets with global integration, facilitated by reforms like screen-based trading, dematerialisation, rolling settlements, corporate governance, and risk management.

He emphasised collaboration as the real foundation, praising contributions from market participants, government, regulators, professionals, and media. Investor trust, he added, is the key asset, earned over time and protected daily.

Pandey cited India's market growth with over 5,900 listed firms, 140 million investors, 15 per cent CAGR in market capitalisation, and 20 per cent growth in mutual fund assets. He stressed the need of technology and regulatory simplification. —*ANI*

Meta, Microsoft's job cuts fuel fears of labour crisis

NEW DELHI, 25 APRIL

Meta and Microsoft has announced to lay off around 22,000 employees, which has heightened fears of an AI driven labour crisis.

While Meta recently announced its plans to lay off 10% of its workforce, equaling about 8,000 jobs, Microsoft confirmed that it will offer voluntary buyouts. Nike will also lay off 1,400 employees. Several companies spending hundreds of billions of dollars to build out artificial intelligence infrastructure for AI services are seeking efficiencies from AI by cutting jobs. Economists and industry experts fear that a labor crisis is looming large, given how AI is sweeping across corporate America.

Over 92,000 tech workers have been laid off so far in 2026. —*Agencies*

Peak power demand hits record

NEW DELHI, 25 APRIL

India's peak power demand reached a record high of 252.07 GW on Friday, driven by an intensifying heatwave that increased the use of cooling devices like air conditioners and desert coolers, according to the power ministry.

The previous peak of 250 GW was recorded in May 2024. The latest data shows the highest supply on 24 April, surpassing 240.12 GW on 23 April, with 22 April reaching 239.70 GW.

The ministry had projected a peak demand of 270 GW for this summer but actual figures remained below estimates.

Last year, peak demand in June 2025 was 242.77GW. In April 2026, demand stayed below the 235.32 GW recorded in April 2025's first fortnight.

Experts predict further increases as rising heat prompts more use of cooling appliances, supported by the IMD's forecast of heatwave conditions across northwest, central, and eastern India.

The IMD predicts a harsh summer, especially in May and June, with demand reaching new heights driven by extreme temperatures and cooling needs. —*PTI*

AAI's engineers body flags ATC services' privatisation

MUMBAI, 25 APRIL

The Air Traffic Safety Electronic Personnel Association (ATSEPA) at the Airports Authority of India (AAI) has urged Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu to reconsider the proposed privatisation of air traffic control services.

In a letter, ATSEPA General Secretary YP Gautam warned that shifting control away from the AAI without establishing an autonomous regulatory entity could compromise India's national strategic capabilities.

Alleging that the rollback of that framework has resulted instructural inconsistency, he said, "Privatisation will be seen as a policy decision that weakens an existing national capability. —*PTI*

CANADA KILLINGS

Altman sorry as OpenAI fails to report shooting

VANCOUVER, 25 APRIL

The head of OpenAI, Sam Altman has apologised that his company didn not alert law enforcement about the online behaviour of a person, who shot and killed eight people in Tumbler Ridge, British Columbia.

In the letter posted on 24 April, Sam Altman expressed his deepest condolences to the entire community.

The letter appeared on BC Premier David Eby's social media and also on the local news website Tumbler RidgeLines on 24 April.

On 10 February, an 18-year-old alleged shooter, identified as Jesse Van Rootselaar, killed her mother, Jennifer Jacobs, and stepbrother, Emmett Jacobs, in their northern British Columbia home before heading to the nearby Tumbler Ridge Secondary School and opening fire, killing five children and an educator before killing herself. 25 people were also injured in the attack.

After the shootings, OpenAI revealed that last June the company identified Van Rootselaar's account using abuse detection efforts for "furtherance of violent activities." It banned the account for violating its usage policy.

The San Francisco technology company said it considered whether to refer the account to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, but determined at the time that the account activity didn't meet a threshold for referral to law enforcement.

At the time, Eby said it "looks like" OpenAI had the opportunity to prevent the mass shooting.

Altman said he had spoken with Tumbler Ridge Mayor Darryl Krakowka and Eby and they "conveyed the anger, sadness and concern" felt in the community. Altman reaffirmed his commitment to find ways to prevent similar tragedies.

Eby called the apology "necessary, and yet grossly insufficient for the devastation done to the families of Tumbler Ridge." —*PTI*

Screenwriters approve deal with US studios

LOS ANGELES, 25 APRIL

90 per cent members of Writers Guild voted in favour of the deal –*FREEPIK*

Members of the Writers Guild of America overwhelmingly approved a four-year agreement with Hollywood studios and streamers on Friday, ending a prolonged strike with a swift and smooth process.

Union leaders announced that 90 per cent voted in favour of the deal between the Writers Guild of America West, Writers Guild of America East, and the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers. Studios will now negotiate with actors and directors.

The deal emphasises improvements in health coverage, with WGA West President Michele Mulroney stating, "In the face of industry contraction and runaway health care cost inflation, writers were able to secure a contract that returns our Health Fund to a sustainable path and builds on gains from the 2023 strike."

The agreement also includes minimum pay hikes for comedy and variety writers, with increased residuals for re-airing work.

The AMPTP congratulated the union, describing the deal as "a collaborative approach that supports both writers and the industry's long-term stability."

This agreement followed a tentative deal, contrasting sharply with the contentious negotiations in 2023, leading to a strike. Negotiations with actors via SAG-AFTRA are underway. —*PTI*

-PTI

Bhullar stays in top-5 despite a tough third round

SINGAPORE, 25 APRIL

Battling tough conditions, India's Gaganjeet Bhullar shot one-over 72 in the third round but remained inside the top-5 at the Singapore Open here Saturday. Sitting at the top of the leaderboard at the USD 2 million International Series event is Korea's Jeongwoo Ham, who, after shooting a 68, has been in the lead across all three days. In energy-sapping conditions with the formidable Serapong course at the Sentosa Golf Club to boot, Bhullar hung on gamely to shoot 1-over 72 on a moving day in a round that was all about minimising the damage and staying in the mix. Bhullar currently lies in tied fifth place at 6-under 207, a position he shared with Thai Jazz.—*PTI*

Abhay loses to former World No.1 Gawad in Zurich

ZURICH, 25 APRIL

India's Abhay Singh lost to Egyptian former World No. 1 and world champion Karim Gawad in a thriller in the men's quarterfinals of the Grasshopper Cup, a PSA Gold-level event, in Zurich. World No 24 Singh recovered from 6-0 down to force the opening game into a tie-break, and went toe-to-toe with world No 4 Gawad in the second, before the Egyptian second seed clinched the contest 12-10, 11-9. "The pace was really fast. We've only played twice, but I feel like we've played more than that. In Qatar (2025), he (Singh) beat me in four, and today I got on court and thought I didn't want to lose again," Gawad said.—*PTI*

-PTI

Olympic medallist Gurbax Grewal no more

CHANDIGARH, 25 APRIL

Olympic hockey medallist Gurbax Singh Grewal has died following a heart attack in Zirakpur near here. He was 84. Grewal, who was part of the Indian team that secured a bronze medal at the 1968 Mexico City Olympics, died on Friday. In a rare distinction, he represented India at the same Olympics alongside his brother Balbir Singh Grewal, marking one of the few instances of siblings featuring together in the national hockey side at the Games. Beyond his playing career, Grewal served as a senior sports officer with Western Railways, where he played a key role in identifying and inducting talent, including several players from Rajasthan, into the Railways hockey setup.—*PTI*

Man City shocked by Brighton in Women's Super League

LONDON, 25 APRIL

Manchester City's title party plans suffered a setback as the Women's Super League leader lost 3-2 at mid-table Brighton & Hove Albion on Saturday, delaying its likely coronation. City knew a win - coupled with an Arsenal loss or draw at home to bottom side Leicester City on Wednesday - would secure a first league trophy since 2016, but Madison Haley struck twice either side of Kiko Seike's goal, as Brighton produced an upset. Andree Jeglertz's Man City remains on 49 points after 20 of 22 games, while second-placed Chelsea has 40 points from 19 matches. Arsenal, in third, has 38 but has played just 17 games. "I am fully sure that when we are back again in training.—*AGENCIES*

Rahul's century goes in vain as Punjab Kings beat Delhi

Prabhsimran and Shreyas help PBKS to stay unbeaten in IPL

NEW DELH, 25 APRIL

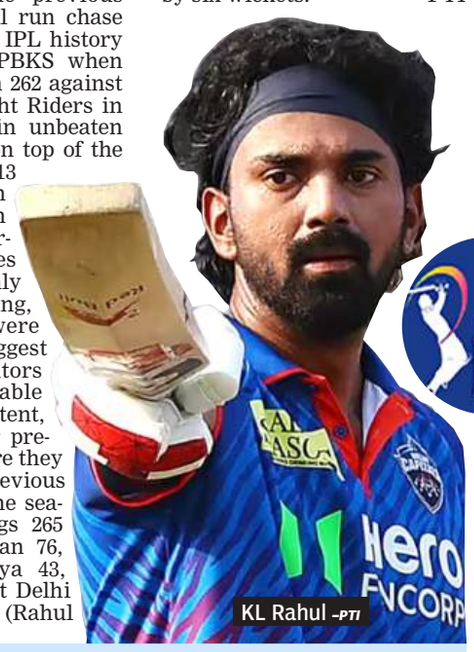
Punjab Kings rewrote the T20 record books with a breathtaking batting blitz, pulling off the highest-ever successful chase in the format's history by overhauling a daunting 265-run target to outgun Delhi Capitals by six wickets in an IPL run-fest here on Saturday.

K L Rahul blended grace with power to script a stroke-filled 152, the third-highest individual IPL score, while Nitish Rana (91) batted with authority as the duo powered hosts Delhi Capitals to a mammoth 264 for 2 after opting to bat first.

Two years after chasing down 262 against Kolkata Knight Riders, PBKS bettered its own record by tracking down 265 against Delhi Capitals at the Arun Jaitley Stadium. With Shreyas Iyer smashing an unbeaten 71 and Prabhsimran Singh a 26-ball 76, Punjab clinched a six-wicket win with seven balls to spare.Skipper Shreyas Iyer, who was dropped by Karun Nair twice in the span of three balls, then scored an unbeaten 71 off 36 deliveries to take PBKS over the line with as many as seven balls to spare.

Incidentally, the previous highest successful run chase in T20 as well as IPL history also belongs to PBKS when they chased down 262 against the Kolkata Knight Riders in 2024. They remain unbeaten this season and on top of the points table with 13 points from seven games. In a match where 49 boundaries and 33 sixes were hit, with only six wickets falling, the bowlers were arguably the biggest losers. The visitors showed remarkable composure and intent, building on their previous outing where they had scored the previous highest total of the season. Punjab Kings 265 for 4 (Prabhsimran 76, Shreyas 71*, Arya 43, Kuldeep 2-46) beat Delhi Capitals 264 for 2 (Rahul 152*, Rana, 91, Arshdeep 1-49) by six wickets. —*PTI*

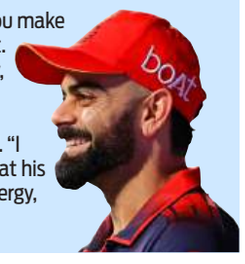
Prabhsimran Singh -PTI



KL Rahul -PTI

Kohli's mindset sets him apart, says Dahiya after GT loss to RCB

Gujarat Titans assistant coach Vijay Dahiya heaped rich praise on Virat Kohli, saying the former India captain's relentless drive and hunger to improve continue to set him apart. Kohli won the Man of the Match award for his match-defining 44-ball 81 in RCB's five-wicket win against GT in the Indian Premier League here on Friday. Dahiya revealed that Kohli was disappointed despite his strong innings, reflecting the batter's high standards. "After the game, he was saying he could have converted it into a hundred. That tells you about his mindset," Dahiya said at the post-match press conference. Highlighting what makes Kohli special, Dahiya pointed to his energy, awareness, and ability to control the game. "When you are commanding the situation, you make bowlers bowl where you want. He made the wicket look easy, but it wasn't," Dahiya noted, adding that the knock came against "world-class bowlers". "I think it's amazing. If you look at his energy... his awareness, his energy, and his willingness.



Rahane, Pant under scrutiny as KKR, LSG fight to stay alive

LUCKNOW, 25 APRIL

The adage that a captain is only as good as his team holds a grim truth for Rishabh Pant and Ajinkya Rahane. As Lucknow Super Giants and Kolkata Knight Riders prepare to meet this Sunday in the IPL, both find their leadership under fire, mirroring the fading fortunes of their respective franchises.

KKR's bold call to persist with Rahane at the helm after a woeful IPL 2025 campaign was debated even before the tournament began. The concerns have only deepened as results failed to follow.

It took them seven matches to register their first win -- a narrow escape powered by individual brilliance from Rinku Singh rather than a collective resurgence. Rahane has indeed shown a transformative approach with flashes of positive intent -- a 67 off 40 against the Mumbai Indians and a brisk 41 off 24 against LSG. But, in a format on the fast lane, those starts have rarely translated into match-shaping contributions.

At a time when he is nearly 38, persisting with him as a long-term T20 leader looks increasingly out of step with the demands of the format.

Rahane hasn't been helped by a depleted pace attack and a quiet start from spin spearhead Varun Chakravarthy.

Yet, along with head coach Abhishek Nayar, who had an equally uninspiring campaign with UP Warriorz at this season's Women's Premier League, Rahane has been found wanting in key areas team selection and resource utilisation. Rachin Ravindra continues to warm the bench, while Finn Allen and Seifert have played musical chairs without clarity. The match starts at 7:30 PM. —*PTI*

Rishabh Pant -PTI

CSK look to build momentum; GT seek course correction

CHENNAI, 25 APRIL

-PTI

Riding a resurgent run, Chennai Super Kings will look to consolidate their position in the top half, while Gujarat Titans aim to arrest a slide when the two sides face off in a crucial mid-season IPL clash here on Sunday.

After a sluggish start, CSK have turned things around, winning three of their last four matches, including a commanding 103-run victory over the Mumbai Indians that was powered by Sanju Samson's second century of the season.

Sanju Samson's superb white-ball form has reignited the debate over India's ODI wicketkeeper spot, with many fans and experts questioning whether he should replace Rishabh Pant ahead of the 2027 ODI World Cup.

After strong performances in the T20 World Cup earlier this year, Samson has carried his form into IPL 2026 with remarkable consistency. The Chennai batter has scored 293 runs in seven matches at an average of 58.60 and a strike rate of 178.65, including two centuries this season.

Led by Ruturaj Gaikwad, CSK are placed just outside the top four with six points and will be keen to avoid further slip-ups as they chase a playoff berth.

At the moment, things are looking up for CSK. Samson's brilliance with the bat, complemented by a clinical bowling effort led by Akeal Hosein, scripted their emphatic win over Mumbai.

Notably, they achieved it without talisman MS Dhoni (calf injury) and local talent Ayush Mhatre (hamstring), who has contributed 201 runs this season.

However, a few concerns remain. While the top order has delivered consistently, the middle order has struggled to show intent and build partnerships. Against Sunrisers Hyderabad, CSK should have comfortably chased down 130 from 90 balls with eight wickets in hand, but a middle-order collapse derailed the effort. —*PTI*

TCS WORLD 10K BENGALURU

Ugandan duo Sarah Chelangat and Harbert eye top honours

BENGALURU, 25 APRIL

Defending champion Sarah Chelangat and Harbert Kibet aim to make an Ugandan double by winning the women's and men's titles respectively in the 18th edition of the TCS World 10K, a World Athletics Gold Label Road Race, here on Sunday.

Sarah was not fully fit when she won the title last year, but she is injury-free this time and is looking to better her 2025 winning time of 31 minutes 7 seconds.

"I am feeling fully fit when compared to last year. I won the 2025 title despite a back injury. I recovered fast and am ready to clock a better time to retain my crown," Sarah said at the customary pre-race press conference.

The 24-year-old Sarah is a double gold medalist in the 2018 Youth Olympics and a 2024 Paris Olympics finalist in the 10,000m.

Defending champion Sarah Chelangat, Harbert Kibet and others pose in front of Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru on Sunday -PTI

as well. I am not sure if I will run on track over the summer. However, I might aim for the Commonwealth Games," said Brenda.

The 25-year-old Belayneh, a 5000m World Championships finalist in Tokyo, had been focusing on the half-marathon for quite some time. She has a 10K personal best of 30 minutes and hopes to run faster if Castellon with a fantastic time of 26:39, which is almost a minute faster than the Bengaluru World 10K event record for men, which also makes him a hot favourite to capture the men's title this year.

Kibet already represented his country at the 2024 World U20 Championships in Lima and at last year's World Championships in Tokyo.—*PTI*

KOTHARI SURVIVES CHULHO SCARE; ADVANI BEGINS IN STYLE

CARLOW, 25 APRIL

Reigning champion Sourav Kothari survived a scare before beating Hwang Chulho in his opening match of the IBSF World Billiards Championship that got underway here on Saturday.

The Indian ace overcame South Korea's Chulho 305-238 after being down by over 120 points with about 30 minutes to go.Kothari, also the reigning national champion, came up with a crucial break of 111 to put it past the tricky Korean. There were no hiccups for most of the other Indian contenders in action on the opening day.

Former champion Pankaj Advani's runaway 1003-54 win over Michael Crook of the Isle of Man was the highlight of the day. Advani floored his rival with a barrage of breaks; runs of 198, 297, and 117 flowed from his cue. The 40-year-old Bengalurean reduced his senior opponent to a mere spectator in the 90-minute affair. —*PTI*

Vanshika and Chirag win 10m air pistol mixed team gold

CAIRO, 25 APRIL

Vanshika Chaudhary and Chirag Sharma won the 10m air pistol mixed team event at the ISSF Junior World Cup here on Saturday, taking India's gold tally to five.

With one more day of competitions left, India continued to lead the medal table with five gold, five silver, and four bronze.

The duo shot 484.3 to shrug off the challenge of Aliaksandra Piatrova and Mikita Daubash (467.6) representing the Individual Neutral Athletes (AIN). The second Indian pair of Mohini Singh and Himanshu Rana tallied 407.4 to clinch bronze in the four-team final.

Indian shooters Vanshika Chaudhary and Chirag Sharma -ISSF

Vanshika and Chirag had earlier shot a combined 582 on Saturday morning at the Olympic International City Shooting range to top the 14-team qualifiers, while Mohini and Himanshu finished third as well with a 568.

It was a second gold in the tournament for Vanshika, having earlier won the individual women's 10m air pistol title. It was also a second medal for Chirag, who had earlier won bronze in the junior men's air pistol.

The Trap men's and women's competitions also concluded on the day when India had one finalist each. Both Zuhair Khan and Bhavya Tripathi claimed the sixth qualifying spot in their respective qualifiers. While Zuhair shot 115, Bhavya recorded 108 after five rounds.

Bhavya then finished eighth in the junior women's trap final, where Italian Martina Montani won gold with a new junior world record score of 26 hits out of a possible 30.

In the men's final, Zuhair finished seventh as France's Agez Thomas also shot a junior world record score of 28 to win the event. —*PTI*

PREMIER LEAGUE

Sessegnon's strike gives Fulham victory

MANCHESTER, 25 APRIL

Aston Villa missed a chance to move into the top three of the Premier League after a 1-0 loss at Fulham on Saturday.

Fourth-placed Villa could have leapfrogged Manchester United in third with a point at Craven Cottage. But Ryan Sessegnon's 43rd-minute goal sealed the win for Fulham.

Fulham continued their fight for European football with a hard-fought victory at home to Aston Villa.

At times, Unai Emery was jumping all around his technical area as he saw his team fail to take their opportunities.

Indeed, Villa had two great chances in just a few minutes midway through the first half, first from Morgan Rogers and then shortly after, Ollie Watkins showed great centre-forward play to outmuscle his marker but fizzed an effort just wide.

Shortly before the break, Fulham took the lead. Timothy Castagne whipped in a ball from the right that Sasa Lukic met with a header. That effort was palmed but only as far as the onrushing Ryan Sessegnon, who made it 1-0.

The home side felt like they should have a second midway through the second half when Castagne headed in from a corner. However, the goal was disallowed due to Sander Berge and Emiliano Martínez having a minor tussle in the build-up.

By the letter of the law, it was the correct decision, but it was exactly the kind of thing we see at almost every set-piece this season.

Villa got away with one there, but they looked like they ran out of steam late on as they tried to find a leveller.

Substitute Tammy Abraham almost got one when he showed great skill to escape his defender, but fired his shot over. —*PTI*

B'uru plays a goalless draw against Mumbai

BENGALURU, 25 APRIL

Hosts Bengaluru FC were held to a goalless draw by Mumbai City FC in a tightly-contested ISL game with both sides squandering chances in an end-to-end contest here.

The opening exchanges were played with high intensity, with Mumbai City FC coming closest to breaking the deadlock in the first 20 minutes.

A dangerous cross from the left flank found Valpuia at the far post, but goalkeeper Gurpreet Singh Sandhu pulled off a crucial save to keep the scores level.

Bengaluru FC, playing their last game at home, responded late in the first half, with Ryan Williams nearly putting his side ahead in the 38th minute.

Latching onto a deep cross from Ashique, Williams guided his effort just wide as the teams went into the break locked at 0-0.

Mumbai had a golden chance soon after the restart when Lallinzuala Chhangte found himself one-on-one with Gurpreet. The forward rounded the goalkeeper but fired into the side netting, letting Bengaluru off the hook. —*PTI*